CHRISTIAN'S Great INTEREST:

IN TWO PARTS.

I. The Trial of a Saving Interest in CHRIST.

II. The WAY how to attain it.

By Mr. *WILLIAM GUTHRIE*, Minister of the Gospel at FINWICK.

To which is prefix'd,

A large Account of his Life, &c. by Way of Introduction, by the late Rev. Mr. William Dunlop; and a Preface by the late Rev. Mr. Trail, with some Account of the Author from Mr. Wodrow's History.

2 PET. i. 10. *Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure.*

2 COR. xiii. 5. *Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves: know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates.*

CANT. vi. 3. *I am my Beloved's, and my Beloved is mine.*

GLASGOW:
Printed by JOHN BRYCE, and sold by him at his Shop in the SALT-MARKET. 1765.

BRITISH
MUSEUM

MEMOIRS

OF THE

LIFE AND CHARACTER

OF

Mr. *WILLIAM GUTHRIE.*

THERE is no treatiſe of this kind that hath been more powerfully recommended to the public eſteem and approbation of this church, both by the excellency of its compoſure, and its uncommon ſucceſs and extenſive uſefulneſs among perſons of all ranks, than this performance of the worthy Mr. Guthrie: but tho', upon this account, it hath been frequently reprinted; yet moſt of the editions hitherto publiſhed have been very defective, as to the goodneſs of the paper, the beauty and neatneſs of the character, or the correctneſs and accuracy of the printing, which are circumſtances, that have no ſmall influence on the pleaſure, and ſometimes on the profit of reading any compoſure.

Theſe inconveniences, joined with the high value which was juſtly entertained for this excellent treatiſe, were the reaſons which determined the publiſher of this edition to be at ſome pains in furniſhing the world with copies of it, that ſhould have ſome meaſure of exactneſs and beauty. For which purpoſe the greateſt care was taken to correct this edition by that copy which the author himſelf publiſhed, Anno 1659. Beſides which the ſcriptures quoted by him are now tranſcribed at full length; whereas in that, and all other editions, the chapter and verſe are only referred to; which was a mighty inconvenience to the reader, who muſt be put to a great deal of trouble, if he ſearched out all the paſſages in his Bible, and could not but loſe the

very deſign of the quotations, if he did it not: and conſequently this preſent edition may, upon this account, be read with more pleaſure, and to better advantage than thoſe which have preceded it: an orderly diviſion of the whole treatiſe into chapters, and a diſtinction of the ſeveral periods by new lines conveniently diſpoſed, which are another improvement of the preſent impreſſion, do alſo contribute an additional ornament and advantage to this edition.

In the latter editions of this treatiſe, eſpecially ſuch as were printed in England, there is one conſiderable defect; ſeveral words and phraſes uſed by the author have been changed, becauſe it was thought they would not be eaſily underſtood by the generality of Engliſh readers, and others of a more modern dreſs placed in their ſtead: but beſides that, this is too great a freedom to be uſed by the editors of any author's performances, and detracts from their genuine purity; the perſons, who aſſumed that liberty in the preſent caſe, have had the misfortune not to underſtand the Scotticiſms themſelves; and therefore have impoſed a ſenſe upon ſome paſſages, very different from the deſign and meaning of the writer. Now, that alſo is remedied in this edition, where every thing is reſtored to its original purity: and a liſt of Scots words, with an explication of them, is ſubjoined, whereby they are made eaſy to the Engliſh reader.

It is hoped it will not be unacceptable to the reader, that we now give ſome account of the author of ſo valuable a Treatiſe; and make a few obſervations upon the performance itſelf: for tho' the reverend Mr. Trail hath already in ſome meaſure prevented us by his preface to the London edition, Anno 1705, yet a very worthy miniſter of this church, and a near relation of Mr. Guthrie's, having provided us with a great many additional materials for this purpoſe; we are thereby enabled to afford a more diſtinct and particular information concerning the excellent author, than Mr. Trail could do.

Mr.

Mr. William Guthrie was eldeſt ſon to the laird of Pitforthy in the ſhire of Angus, a cadet of the old family of Guthrie; and by the mother's ſide deſcended from the ancient houſe of Eaſter-Ogle, of which ſhe was a daughter: whereby he enjoyed ſuch advantages of birth, as at leaſt raiſed him above the contempt of thoſe who give the higheſt value to nobleneſs of blood, and dote moſt fondly on the antiquity of families. GOD bleſſed his parents with a numerous offspring, ſo that he hath three ſiſters german, and four brothers, all of which, except one, dedicated themſelves to the ſervice of GOD in the goſpel of his ſon: namely, Robert who was licenſed to preach, but never ordained to a parochial charge, his tender conſtitution and numerous infirmities rendring him unequal for ſo laborious an office, and bringing him ſoon to an end of his days. Alexander, who became miniſter of the pariſh of Strickathrow, in the preſbytery of Brechin in Angus; about the year 1645, where he continued a pious and uſeful labourer in the work of the goſpel, till the introduction of prelacy; which unhappy change of our conſtitution affected him in the tendereſt manner, and is thought to have ſhortned his days, and contributed to his death, Anno 1661. And John the youngeſt ſon, miniſter of Torbolton in the ſhire of Air, in which poſt he remained till he was turned out at the reſtoration, for non-conformity, and had his ſhare of the violence and cruelty which then reigned; till in the year 1669, he was removed to the better world of peace and joy. And as it was a very diſtinguiſhed Honour to this family, that of five ſons, four of them ſhould have devoted themſelves to the nobleſt Employment of human nature, the miniſtry of reconciliation, and the promoting the eternal happineſs of periſhing ſouls; ſo no doubt, it was one of the moſt pleaſing circumſtances in the life of our author, and could not but mightily heighten the endearments of a natural relation to his brothers, that they were at the ſame time brethren in the miniſtry, and united

the peculiar ſervice of their common LORD.

He was born at Pitforthy in the year 1620, and no ſooner got beyond the bloom of infancy, but he gave proofs of his capacity and genius, by very quick and conſiderable advances in the Latin and Greek tongues. After which he was ſent to the univerſity of St. Andrews, where he ſtudied philoſophy under the memorable Mr. James Guthrie, who was afterwards miniſter at Stirling: and became ſo famous by his uncommon zeal for the religion and liberty of his country, and by his being made one of the earlieſt ſacrifices to the growing tyranny of K. Charles II's reign. The ſcholar being the maſter's relation, was entitled to his peculiar care, lodged, when at the college, in the ſame chamber with him, and had thereby the principles of learning infuſed into him with more accuracy and advantage than his claſs-fellows, in conjunction with a conſtant regard to GOD and religion, and early impreſſions of piety; and no doubt this happy ſituation contributed not a little to the unuſual progreſs he made in all the parts of univerſity ſtudies.

Having taken the Degree of maſter of arts, he applied himſelf for ſome years to the ſtudy of divinity, under the direction of Mr. Samuel Rutherford. After which, being entered upon trials, which he underwent with great applauſe, he was licenſed to preach the goſpel in Auguſt 1642. and according to Mr. Trails account, he not only happily improved in Theological learning, under Mr. Rutherford as profeſſor of divinity; but the miniſtry of that good man, ſo juſtly celebrated for his affecting and lively preaching, and holy life, was, by the bleſſing of GOD, made the inſtrument, if not of his converſion, which his early piety gives us ground to believe was ſooner effected, at leaſt of great advances in a religious life, which was ſo endeared to his ſoul, that he reſolved to devote himſelf to the immediate ſervice of GOD in the office of the holy miniſtry: and in conſequence of that pious reſolution, he gave an uncommon inſtance of mortification

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to theworld, and with how ardent a zeal he deſigned to give himſelf wholly to the work of the goſpel in quitting his paternal eſtate to the only brother of the five who was not engaged in the ſacred office, that thereby he himſelf might be perfectly diſentangled from the affairs of this life, and intirely employed in thoſe of the eternal world. Soon after his being licenſed he left St. Andrews, accompanied with the high eſteem and approbation of the profeſſors of that univerſity, which they gave proof of by a recommendation conceived in terms ſo full and ſtrong, that they bore the character of an inward regard and value, more than the form of a cuſtomary teſtimonial. After this, he became governor to my lord Maucſilin, eldeſt ſon to the Earl of Lowdon, Chancellor of Scotland; in which ſtation he continued till he entred upon a parochial charge, of which this was the occaſion.

He was employed to preach in Galſtoun upon a a preparation day, before the celebration of the Lord's ſupper, and where ſeveral members of the new erected parish of Finwick being preſent, they were ſo much edified by the ſermon, and conceived ſo juſt a value for him, that they immediately reſolved to make choice of him for their miniſter; and in conſequence hereof, gave him a very harmonions call, which Mr. Guthrie having compliedwith, he was ordained to the ſacred office of that pariſh, November 7th, 1644. In this place he had peculiar difficulties to ſtruggle with, and many circumſtances of his miniſtry extremly diſcouraging; and yet through the divine bleſſing, the goſpel preached by him had ſurpriſing ſucceſs, and became, in an eminent manner the wiſdom and power of God to the ſalvation of loſt ſouls.

As this was a new erected pariſh, and Mr. Guthrie the firſt paſtor of it; the people had been very much neglected, and had not enjoyed the means of grace with that eaſe and advantange which others were favouredwith: The melancholy effects whereof were evidently diſcernable in the rudeneſs

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groſs ignorance of many of them; and conſequently in a too general neglect of God and religion.

But under all theſe diſadvantages, that heavenly zeal for the glory of his great maſter which animated the labours of this excellent miniſter, his fervent love to the ſouls of men dying in their ſins, and his holy wiſdom and diligence in reclaiming and inſtructing them, were ſo honoured by God, and accompanied with the powerful influences of his holy Spirit, that in a little time a noble change was wrought upon a barbarous multitude; they were almoſt all peruſaded to attend the public ordinances, to ſet up and maintain the ſtated worſhip of God in their families; and ſcarce was there a houſe in the whole pariſh, that did not bring forth ſome fruits of his miniſtry, and afford ſome real converts to a religious life. And thus he was made the inſtrument of many notable triumphs of victorious grace, which Jeſus Chriſt leads over the ſouls of obſtinate tranſgreſſors, when he turns them from their ways, and ſubdues the people under him. And what can be more worthy of everlaſting Remembrance, than ſuch glorious atchievements in the ſpiritual warfare, and ſucceſsful battles with the implacable Enemy of the happineſs of mankind and the kingdom of their maker, which will one day ſhine with an eternal luſtre, and be celebrated with louder and more laſting acclamations of an endleſs world, than the fading honour of an earthly diadem, or the braveſt actions and moſt finiſhed victory of any of the heroes of war, who make now ſuch noiſe and buſtle upon the ſtage? And how little needed the man we are now ſpeaking of, to envy the dazling pomp and ſhew of this earth, or to be deſirous of its richeſt treaſures? He poſſeſſed another portion, ſince almoſt every family in his pariſh, however little and obſcure, afforded a ſhining ornament for that divine crown of glory and rejoicing, which ſhall be beautified with the Luſtre of an eternal excellency, and be by the triumphant king of the church, beſtowed upon all thoſe who have turned many unto righteouſneſs.

Mr. Guthrie was poſſeſſed of all theſe qualities which became a miniſter of the goſpel, and being accompanied by the powerful influences of divine grace, gave a happy proſpect of uncommon ſucceſs: for, beſides his excellent endowments which were diſcovered in the pulpit, he was eminently fitted to improve, for the edification of his people, the miniſterial duties of viſiting and Catechizing; in performing whereof he joined an indefatigable diligence to a holy ſkill, knew how to embrace every opportunity of diſcourſing upon the moſt important and awful ſubjects, in a plain and familiar manner, and of recommending religion to the conſciences of every one in the way which their ſpecial circumſtances called for. And it was his peculiar care to endear the ways of God to the youth of his pariſh, and give them early impreſſions of an eternal world, before the devil and their luſts had ſeized upon their hearts, and enſlaved them; and the ſeed of grace that was thus ſown during the ſpring of life, was through the divine bleſſing, preſerved in many as they advanced in years, and brought forth much fruit. Nor did Mr. Guthrie neglect, in viſiting poor families, to join works of charity to his inſtructions, and imitate his great Maſter, in ſhewing compaſſion both to the bodies and ſouls of men. By all which winning methods he engaged their eſteem and affections, which could not fail to add a mighty force to his exhortations and reproofs.

He excelled alſo in that uſeful mean of knowlege, catechizing, and avoiding thoſe miſtakes in the management of this exerciſe, which frequently leſſen the advantage thereof: his queſtions were moſtly confined to ſuch truths of the doctrine according to godlineſs, as were recommended by their great importance, and extenſive influence upon practical religion; herein conforming himſelf to the apoſtolical injunction, by inſiſting upon theſe things which were good and profitable unto men, and avoiding foolith and trifling queſtions that were vain and uſeleſs; and knowing that it was his buſineſs

neſs to feed the meaneſt and weakeſt of the Chriſtian flock with wholeſome inſtruction, he adapted theſe exerciſes to the loweſt capacities, began with the moſt eaſy and obvious truths of religion, and ſo prepared the way for thoſe which required a more enlightned underſtanding. He was careful not to expoſe the ignorant, ſo as to beget a diſtaſte in them of the means of knowledge, nor to confound the modeſt and baſhful; but by his meekneſs and condeſcenſion he encouraged and engaged them; whereby catechizing became a pleaſure to them, and he had the joy to ſee uſeful and ſolid knowledge ſpreading it ſelf among a people whom he found groſly ignorant.

His own experience in the ways of GOD, and the great depths of troubles and ſorrows, doubts and fears, whereby awakned conſciences are exerciſed, into which he himſelf was often plunged, eminently qualified him for aſſiſting and comforting others in the like circumſtances, for ſtrengthning the weak hands, and confirming the feeble knees; and could not miſs to beget in him that affectionate concern for poor ſouls, thoſe bowels of tenderneſs and ſympathy, which can never be found with any but ſuch, who themſelves have had a feeling acquaintance with the Methods of the ſpiritual life, and the work of the holy ſpirit in their own hearts and lives. And it were eaſy to enlarge upon the uncommon dexterity which this excellent perſon had in improving ſickneſs, and the approaches of the king of terrors, to the advantage of thoſe who were expoſed to them: ſo that though inſtances of a death bed repentance rarely happen, and it be indeed infinite madneſs to delay to the laſt hour that work which is of eternal conſequence; yet there wanted not evidences of the divine bleſſing upon his endeavours to reclaim ſinners, and call them to GOD even in the laſt hour.

It would be juſtly blameable if we neglect to mention one other noble quality of Mr. Guthrie's; the ſtate of his health made it neceſſary for him to uſe frequent

frequent and vigorous exercises, and this made him choose fishing and fowling for his common recreations: but as he was always animated by a flaming zeal for the glory of his blessed Master, and a tender compassion to the souls of men, and as it was the principal thing made him desire life and health that he might imploy them in propagating the kingdom of GOD, and turning transgressors from their ways; so the very hours of his recreation were dedicated to this purpose which was so endeared to him, and he knew how to make his diversions subservient to the nobler ends of his ministry, he made them the occasions of familiarizing his people to him, and introducing himself to their affections; and, in the disguise of a sportsman, he gained some to a religious life, whom he could have little influence upon in a minister's gown; of which there happened several memorable examples.

Some of the parish were so extremely rude and barbarous, that they never attended upon divine worship; and knew not so much as the face of their pastor; to such every thing that regarded religion was distasteful, a minister would have been enough to have frightened them, nor could he have access either to visit or catechise them: but what Mr. Guthrie might have almost otherwise despaired of, he effectuated by his diversions; in the habit which he then wore, he conciliated the esteem and love even of these ignorant creatures, made use of their curiosity, as well as of nobler arguments, to bring them to the church, and enter them into the paths of salvation; so that the pulpit was the first place which discovered to them that it was their minister himself who had allured them thither; and so condescending a method of gaining them procured a constant attendance upon public ordinances, and was at length accompanied by the fruits of righteousness, which are thro' Jesus Christ unto the praise of God. Thus, in imitation of the great Apostle, 'being crafty he caught them with guile'. And this heavenly wisdom and dexterity will be

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one day celebrated with juſter applauſes by the aſſembly of the Firſt-born, than the cunningeſt ſtratagems, or the braveſt attempts which raiſe the character of princes and generals, whoſe fame flies now ſwifteſt and wideſt through the world.

Thus his eminent abilities and unwearied diligence in the work of the miniſtry continued to exert themſelves with diſtinguiſhed ſucceſs; they procured the univerſal love of his pariſh, and he lived for one and twenty years in ſuch perfect harmony with his ſeſſion, that during all that time, there happened not the ſmalleſt difference betwixt them.

His family affairs were alſo very eaſy and comfortable to him. Auguſt 1645, he was happily married to Agnes Campbell, daughter to David Campbell, of Skeldon, in the ſhire of Air, a remote branch of the family of Lowdon; a gentlewoman endowed with all theſe qualities that could render her a bleſſing to her huſband, having joined to a handſome ſhape and comely features, good ſenſe and good breeding, ſweetened by a modeſt cheerfulneſs of temper; and what endeared her to Mr. Guthrie beyond every thing elſe, ſincere piety; ſo that they lived a little more than twenty years, in the moſt complete friendſhip, and with a conſtant mutual ſatisfaction, founded upon the nobleſt principle, one faith, one hope, one baptiſm, and a ſovereign love to Jeſus Chriſt, which zealouſly inſpired them both. By her he had ſix children, two of whom only out-lived him, both daughters, who were eminent for their ſincere piety, and endeavoured to follow the example of their excellent parents. One of them was married to Miller of Glenlee, a gentleman in the ſhire of Air; and the other was married to the reverend Mr. Patrick Warner, December 1681, when the tyranny and cruelty of the times were growing to their height, and ſo ſhe ſoon became a companion to him in tribulation, impriſonment and baniſhment for the truth's ſake; till the glorious revolution, when

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Mr. Warner was ſettled miniſter of the goſpel at Irvine. Both he and ſhe are yet living full of years, waiting till their change come. Their children are, William Warner, of Ardeir, in the ſhire of Air; and Margaret Warner, married to Mr. Robert Wodrow miniſter of the goſpel at Eaſtwood, to whom we are obliged for the materials, from which this account of Mr. Guthrie's life is compoſed.

We have given a ſhort account of Mr. Guthrie's eminent miniſterial endowments, as they appeared in the diſcharge of the paſtoral office among his own people, and of the glorious ſucceſſes wherewith God bleſſed his zealous love and unwearied diligence: but this was not the ſole character which he excelled in; for in every other capacity he gave equal proofs of his ſuperior accompliſhments.

He was diſtinguiſhed in the judicatures of the church, from which he never allowed himſelf to be abſent, by a thorough knowledge of our conſtitution, an heroic courage and firmneſs whenever the cauſe of truth and holineſs was concerned; and that modeſt regard for others, and affection to his brethren, which endeared him to them, and qualified him for the buſineſs and duties of ſociety.

When that unhappy diſtinction betwixt the public Reſolutioners and the Proteſters found place in the church, Mr. Guthrie thought it his duty to be of the laſt denomination: yet he took care that his angry paſſions did not embitter his zeal, which he tempered with a conſtant moderation, and ſweetened with an ardent love to peace. He preached with his brethren of different ſentiments; and warmly entertained every thing that had a tendency to union, and could give proſpect of an accommodation: the power of divine grace, and his native genius and temper, with united force engaging him to healing meaſures, and inſpiring him with an abhorrency for ſuch as were factious and diviſive; ſo that during a ſeaſon of ſo great difficulties and hazards, he avoided every extreme, and became

one day celebrated with juſter applauſes by the aſſembly of the Firſt-born, than the cunningeſt ſtratagems, or the braveſt attempts which raiſe the character of princes and generals, whoſe fame flies now ſwifteſt and wideſt through the world.

Thus his eminent abilities and unwearied diligence in the work of the miniſtry continued to exert themſelves with diſtinguiſhed ſucceſs; they procured the univerſal love of his pariſh, and he lived for one and twenty years in ſuch perfect harmony with his ſeſſion, that during all that time, there happened not the ſmalleſt difference betwixt them.

His family affairs were alſo very eaſy and comfortable to him. Auguſt 1645, he was happily married to Agnes Campbell, daughter to David Campbell, of Skeldon, in the ſhire of Air, a remote branch of the family of Lowdon; a gentlewoman endowed with all theſe qualities that could render her a bleſſing to her huſband, having joined to a handſome ſhape and comely features, good ſenſe and good breeding, ſweetened by a modeſt cheerfulneſs of temper; and what endeared her to Mr. Guthrie beyond every thing elſe, ſincere piety; ſo that they lived a little more than twenty years, in the moſt complete friendſhip, and with a conſtant mutual ſatisfaction, founded upon the nobleſt principle, one faith, one hope, one baptiſm, and a ſovereign love to Jeſus Chriſt, which zealouſly inſpired them both. By her he had ſix children, two of whom only out-lived him, both daughters, who were eminent for their ſincere piety, and endeavoured to follow the example of their excellent parents. One of them was married to Miller of Glenlee, a gentleman in the ſhire of Air; and the other was married to the reverend Mr. Patrick Warner, December 1681, when the tyranny and cruelty of the times were growing to their height, and ſo ſhe ſoon became a companion to him in tribulation, impriſonment and baniſhment for the truth's ſake; till the glorious revolution, when

Mr.

Mr. Warner was ſettled miniſter of the goſpel at Irvine. Both he and ſhe are yet living full of years, waiting till their change come. Their children are, William Warner, of Ardeir, in the ſhire of Air; and Margaret Warner, married to Mr. Robert Wodrow miniſter of the goſpel at Eaſtwood, to whom we are obliged for the materials, from which this account of Mr. Guthrie's life is compoſed.

We have given a ſhort account of Mr. Guthrie's eminent miniſterial endowments, as they appeared in the diſcharge of the paſtoral office among his own people, and of the glorious ſucceſſes wherewith God bleſſed his zealous love and unwearied diligence: but this was not the ſole character which he excelled in; for in every other capacity he gave equal proofs of his ſuperior accompliſhments.

He was diſtinguiſhed in the judicatures of the church, from which he never allowed himſelf to be abſent, by a thorough knowledge of our conſtitution, an heroic courage and firmneſs whenever the cauſe of truth and holineſs was concerned; and that modeſt regard for others, and affection to his brethren, which endeared him to them, and qualified him for the buſineſs and duties of ſociety.

When that unhappy diſtinction betwixt the public Reſolutioners and the Proteſters found place in the church, Mr. Guthrie thought it his duty to be of the laſt denomination: yet he took care that his angry paſſions did not embitter his zeal, which he tempered with a conſtant moderation, and ſweetened with an ardent love to peace. He preached with his brethren of different ſentiments; and warmly entertained every thing that had a tendency to union, and could give proſpect of an accommodation: the power of divine grace, and his native genius and temper, with united force engaging him to healing meaſures, and inſpiring him with an abhorrency for ſuch as were factious and diviſive; ſo that during a ſeaſon of ſo great difficulties and hazards, he avoided every extreme, and be-

came a bright example of a zealous moderation, whereby he was of more than ordinary uſefulneſs to the church on all public occaſions.

In the year 1645, when a young man, he was appointed by the aſſembly to attend the army; a happy conjunction of all the endowments which could qualify a perſon for that ſtation ſoon determining the church to make him their choice. Being newly married, he was then in ſuch circumſtances, as under the Moſaical œconomy, would have afforded him a diſpenſation from that ſervice: and his affectionate wife was not a little frightened at the dangers he might be expoſed to, which increaſed her averſion to ſuch a degree, that her reluctant affection ſtruggled with her duty; but the voice of providence ſoon gave the laſt principle the ſuperiority. When he was preparing for his departure, a violent fit of the gravel reduced him to the greateſt extremity of pain and danger: his religious ſpouſe underſtood and improved the divine chaſtiſement; ſhe ſaw how eaſily God could put an end to a life ſhe was too apprehenſive about; and this wrought her up to a fixed reſolution never to oppoſe her inclinations to his entering upon any imployment whereby he might honour his Maſter, how formidable ſoever were the hazards which attended it.

While he was with the army, he was in a remarkable manner preſerved, when in very dangerous circumſtances, upon a defeat of a party which he was then with. He ever after retained a grateful ſenſe of the divine goodneſs; and, after his return to the pariſh, was animated thereby to a more vigorous diligence in the work of the miniſtry, and propagating the kingdom of the ſon of God, both among his own people, and all who were round about him, his public preaching, eſpecially at the adminiſtration of the Lord's Supper, and his private converſation conſpiring for thoſe nobler purpoſes.

And indeed in other reſpects alſo, his ſhining piety, wiſdom and good breeding made him univerſally

verſally uſeful in the country where he lived. The juſt value which the nobility and gentry in the neighbourhood had for him, and the intereſt which this gave him with them, enabled him to improve ſucceſsfully frequent opportunities he had to do good offices to particular perſons, to compoſe differences, and remove feuds which were ready enough to prevail in the country; and to aſſiſt the judicatures of the church by procuring the conſent and ſupport of thoſe concerned, in planting vacant congregations with men worthy of the ſacred character.

The prevailing of the Engliſh ſectarians under Oliver Cromwel, and the variety of attempts which they made, while in Scotland, upon the conſtitution and diſcipline of the church, was one of the difficulties which the miniſtry had then to ſtruggle with; and it, among others, gave a diſcovery of the excellent qualities of Mr. Guthrie. His pleaſant facetious converſation, and maſterly reaſoning, procured him an univerſal reſpect from the Engliſh officers, and made them fond of his company. While at the ſame time his courage and conſtancy did not fail him in the cauſe of his great Maſter, and were often uſeful to curb the extravagancies of the ſectarians, and maintain order and regularity. One inſtance hereof happened at the ſacrament of the Lord's Supper celebrated at Glaſgow by Mr. Andrew Gray. Several of the Engliſh officers had formed a deſign to put in execution the diſorderly principle of a promiſcuous admiſſion to the Lord's table, by coming to it themſelves without acquainting the miniſter, or being in a due manner found worthy of that privilege. Mr. Guthrie, to whoſe ſhare it fell to diſpenſe the ſacrament at that table, ſpoke to them when they were leaving their pews in order to make their attempt, with ſuch gravity, reſolution and zeal, that they were quite confounded, and ſat down again without occaſioning any further diſturbance.

The Quakers alſo endeavoured about this time to

ſow tares in Mr. Guthrie's pariſh, improving for this end his abſence for ſome weeks, during which he was detained in Angus about his private affairs: but he returned before the poiſon had ſunk deep, recovered ſome that were in hazard of being tainted by its fatal influences; and in conference ſo confounded thoſe Heretics, that they deſpaired of ever attacking with ſucceſs a flock guarded by ſo watchful and ſkilful a ſhepherd, whereas they had made too many proſelytes to their wild deluſions in Kilbride, and ſome other neighbouring Pariſhes.

It may be eaſily imagined, that the eminent gifts and graces of this excellent perſon, would engage pariſhes of greater character and importance, than Finwick, to deſire his miniſtry, and earneſtly labour for ſucceſs in their attempts to obtain it; and indeed his people and himſelf were frequently expoſed to the troubles of proceſſes of tranſportation, and vexed with fears, as to the iſſue of them, Renfrew, Linlithgow, Stirling, Glaſgow and Edinburgh, having all of them called him. But beſide the indifferent opinion he entertained of the method of ſupplying vacancies by tranſportations in general, and that the air and diverſions of a country life were of uſe to him in maintaining a healthy conſtitution; his love to his flock was ſo warm and conſtant, that he put an invincible obſtinacy againſt all deſigns of ſeparating him from them. A relation is indeed founded on the nobleſt bottom, and ſinks deepeſt into the ſoul, when it is animated by the principle of the ſpiritual life; and therefore it muſt in the higheſt degree endear a miniſter to his people, and engage their affection and eſteem by the moſt powerful tye, when his labours have been ſucceſsful in reclaiming them from ſin their ruin, and perſuading them to enter upon a religious life; and ſo they owe to him, as far as they can do to an inſtrument in the hand of GOD, the ſalvation of their immortal ſouls, which is the incomparably ſtrongeſt obligation that one man can have to another, and the moſt flowing ſource of gratitude;

gratitude; and on the other hand a miniſter can ſcarce miſs to have a peculiar tenderneſs and warmth of divine affection for thoſe, whoſe father he is after the ſpirit, and hath been honoured by GOD in bringing them to the kingdom of his Son, and begetting them through the goſpel, whoſe heavenly birth is now the higheſt pleaſure and brighteſt triumph of his life, and will be one day his crown of glory and rejoicing. A friendſhip that had ſuch a life, and was invigorated by a ſpirit ſo pure and active, made Mr. Guthrie prefer Finwick, a poor obſcure pariſh, to the moſt conſiderable charges in the Nation; which was a proof of his mortification to the world, and that he was moved by views ſuperior to temporal intereſts.

Thus Mr. Guthrie continued with his old pariſh, till the great alteration which the reſtoration of King Charles II. made in public affairs. The firſt diſcovery that the meaſures of the court gave a deſign to overturn the government of the church, affected Mr. Guthrie in the moſt ſenſible part; nor could any thing afford him ſatisfaction, while ſhe was in trouble, and about to be laid deſolate: nor did he let any occaſion ſlip of ſhewing his concern for that which was dearer to him than his other intereſts. At the ſynod of Glaſgow, held April 1661, after long reaſoning about proper meaſures for the ſecurity of religion, the matter was referred to a committee; Mr. Guthrie preſented the draught of an addreſs to the parliament wherein a faithful teſtimony was given to the purity of our reformation in worſhip, doctrine, diſcipline, and government, in terms equally remarkable for their prudence and their courage. Every body approved of it, and it was tranſmitted to the ſynod: but ſome worthy miniſters of the ſide of the public reſolutioners, being doubtful of the ſeaſonableneſs of ſuch a repreſentation, conſidering the difficulties of the times, gave an opportunity to thoſe who deſigned to comply with prelacy, to procure a delay, and ſo to cruſh it; which did

not prevent its being ſerviceable to the end of our now mentioning it, namely, affording a proof of the zealous honeſty and firmneſs of Mr. Guthrie.

Another inſtance whereof was, the reſolution he took to wait upon his worthy friend Mr. James Guthrie at his execution, notwithſtanding the apparent hazard he muſt thereby have expoſed himſelf to. But his ſeſſion prevailed upon him, tho' not without difficulty, by their earneſt intreaties, to lay aſide a deſign that could not miſs to deprive them immediately of his miniſtry, which by the goodneſs of GOD, they enjoyed ſome years after his brethren were ejected.

Next to the protection of a kind providence, and the fervent prayers of his own people, and of many others, unto which he always attributed this diſtinguiſhed favour in the firſt place; Mr. Guthrie's being connived at for ſome time, was principally owing to the favour of ſome great men in the government, particularly the earls of Eglintoun and Glencairn, the laſt of whom had a regard for him which was heightned by a conjunction of eſteem and gratitude. Mr. Guthrie having had occaſion to oblige him when impriſoned for his loyalty before the reſtoration, which that noble Lord never forgot, and when he was chancellor, contributed what he could to his preſervation, by which means he enjoyed the peaceable poſſeſſion of his church till the year 1664.

As GOD had deſigned, and prepared him for eminent and extenſive ſervices, during this period, his excellent accompliſhments now exerted themſelves with the greateſt efficacy, and his uſefulneſs was more univerſally diffuſed through the whole country, which was in a great meaſure deprived of their paſtors. Many then hungred after the word of the Lord, and this made them with more eagerneſs embrace the advantage which a merciful providence afforded them, of Mr. Guthrie's miniſtry. Great multitudes reſorted to him from all parts of the Weſt country; his large church was crouded with hearers from Glaſgow, Paiſley, Lanerk,

Lanerk, Hamilton, and other diſtant places, and his ſtrong and clear voice enabled him to extend the profit of his diſcourſes to the many hundreds who were obliged to keep without doors.

An extraordinary zeal then enlivened the ſouls of ſincere chriſtians; they were animated by a warm affection to the truth, and an uncommon delight in hearing the joyful ſound; and this made them deſpiſe the difficulties that lay in their way, and bear cheerfully with many inconveniences, which attendance upon the ſacred ordinances was then accompanied with: ſo that we are aſſured by ſeveral worthy perſons who enjoyed Mr. Guthrie's miniſtry at that time, That it was their uſual practice to come to Finwick upon ſaturday, ſpend the greateſt part of that night in prayer to God, and converſation about the great concerns of their ſouls, attend on the public worſhip on the ſabbath, dedicate the remainder of that holy day to religious exerciſes, and then on the monday go home ten, twelve, or twenty miles, without grudging the fatigue of ſo long a way, and the want of ſleep and other refreſhments, or finding themſelves leſs prepared for any buſineſs throughout the week, ſo much was their heart engaged in the attendance they gave to the ſacred adminiſtrations. A remarkable bleſſing accompanied ordinances that were diſpenſed to people who came with ſuch a diſpoſition of ſoul: great numbers were converted unto the truth, and many were built up in their moſt holy faith. A divine power animated the goſpel that was preached, and exerted itſelf in a holy warmth of ſanctified affections, a raviſhing pleaſure in divine fellowſhip, and a noble joy and triumph in their King and Saviour, which were to be viſibly diſcerned in the hearers; many were confirmed in the good ways of the Lord, ſtrengthned and comforted againſt temporal fears and diſcouragements; and the fruits of righteouſneſs diſcovering their beauty and excellency in a holy converſation, were a glorious proof of the ſincerity of their profeſſion, and

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the wonderful ſucceſs of Mr. Guthrie's miniſtry. And there are ſome of thoſe yet alive, of whoſe converſion to a religious life God honoured him to be the inſtrument, who are ready to atteſt much more than hath been juſt now ſaid; and can never think, without an exultation of ſoul, and emotion of revived affections, upon the memory of their ſpiritual father, and the power of that victorious grace, which in thoſe days triumphed ſo glorioufly.

During theſe few years, while Mr. Guthrie was connived at, the dangers of the time never frightned him from his duty: but, with a becoming boldneſs, fortified his people in a zealous adherence to the purity of our reformation, warned them of the defection that was then made by the introduction of Prelacy, and inſtructed them in the duties of ſo difficult a ſeaſon; while he recommended by his own ſteddineſs what he taught from the pulpit, he conſtantly maintaining fellowſhip with his ejected brethren, and never making the leaſt compliance with the prelatic ſchemes. And yet in his ſermons he governed his courage and faithfulneſs by chriſtian prudence, and with reference to civil affairs, confined himſelf ſo much to the language of the ſacred oracles, and expreſſed himſelf with ſuch a juſt regard to lawful authority, that his enemies could find no occaſion againſt him.

The extraordinary reputation and uſefulneſs of Mr. Guthrie, who was admired and followed by all the country, provoked the jealous and angry paſſions of the prelates; and his excellent merit became one of the cauſes of his being attacked. Interceſſions were indeed made in his behalf, but without ſucceſs, particularly by the earl of Glencairn then chancellor, who made a viſit to the Archbiſhop of Glaſgow, at his houſe there, and at parting, aſked it as a particular favour from him, that Mr. Guthrie might be overlooked, he knowing him to be an excellent man, and well affected to the civil government: but the biſhop not only refuſed him, but did it with a haughty and diſdainful air, telling him, "That

"cau-

" cannot be done, it ſhall not; he is a ring-leader, " and keeper up of ſchiſm in my Dioceſe;" and then pretty abruptly left the chancellor. Rowallan, Cunninghamhead, and ſome other preſbyterian gentlemen, who were waiting on him, obſerving the chancellor diſcompoſed when he left the Archbiſhop, preſumed to aſk what the matter might be. To which the earl anſwered, " We have ſet up " theſe men and they will tread us under their " feet." In conſequence of this reſolution of the inexorable Archbiſhop Burnet, upon the 24 of July 1664, Mr Guthrie was, by a commiſſion from him, ſuſpended, diſcharged the exerciſe of his miniſtry, and his church declared vacant, and he himſelf by an armed force obliged to remove from it: a large account of which will be given by the reverend Mr. Wodrow, in that uſeful and much deſired work, *The hiſtory of the ſufferings of the church of Scotland*, which will ſhortly be publiſhed ‡. He was notwithſtanding allowed to live in his manſe at Finwick, where he continued ſome more than a year; during which he was exceeding uſeful to his people in a private character.

His brother to whom he had made over his paternal eſtate of Pitforthy, dying in the ſummer, 1665, Mr. Guthrie's preſence there was neceſſary for ordering private affairs, which made him and his wife take journey for Angus about that time. He had not been long in that country, till he was ſeized by a complication of diſtempers, the gravel, with which he had been frequently tortured, the Gout, and a violent heart burning, at once attacked him with great fury: the agonies with thoſe three terrible engines of pain occaſioned were almoſt inſupportable; and were therefore a ſcene prepared for a brighter appearance of the conſtancy, patience and reſignation of this worthy miniſter. In the midſt of this heavy

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heavy affliction, he ſtill adored the meaſures of divine providence, though at the ſame time he longed for his diſſolution, and expreſſed the ſatisfaction and joy with which he would make the grave his dwelling-place, when God ſhould think fit to give him reſt there: his compaſſionate maſter at laſt indulged the pious breathings of his ſoul; after eight or ten days illneſs he was gathered to his fathers, and died in the houſe of his brother-in-law, Mr. Lewis Skinner, miniſter at Brechin, upon wedneſday the tenth of October 1665, afternoon, in the 45th year of his age, and was buried in the church of Brechin, under Pitforthy's desk. And as he himſelf died in the full aſſurance of faith, and to his own intereſt in the covenant of God, and under the pleaſing hopes that God would return in glory to the church of Scotland; ſo we have no doubt that his better part, his ſoul was carried by angels to theſe peaceful regions, not one of the inhabitants whereof ever ſays that he is ſick; and is now ſhining amidſt the dazling glories of thoſe ſuperior Orbs, which are deſtined for the heroes of chriſtianity, who hath turned many unto righteouſneſs, and have born a diſtinguiſhed part in the battles and triumphs of the King of ſaints.

During his ſickneſs he was viſited by the Biſhop of Brechin, and epiſcopal miniſters, his relations and acquaintances; who all had a high value for him, notwithſtanding he, with aningenuous freedom, expreſſed to them his ſorrow for their compliance with the corrupt eſtabliſhment in eccleſiaſtical affairs, which was then made.

This ſhort and imperfect account of his life may, in ſome meaſure, let the reader into the character, of this excellent perſon: but we hope it will not be unnacceptable, if without repeating what hath been already repreſented, we in a very plain and ſimple manner, give ſome farther account of his character, as we have it from perſons of undoubted reputation, who were themſelves well acquainted with him.

His

His perſon was ſtately and well ſhaped, and his features comely and handſome. And while he was raiſed above an effeminate delicacy, which was unworthy the dignity of the miniſterial character, he abhorred a ſlovenly meanneſs, as very far below it and was therefore neat and cleanly in his apparel and in his whole behaviour, as well as in his dreſs, there was nothing that could give the leaſt diſguſt to gentlemen of the politeſt education and niceſt taſte. An awful gravity dwelt upon his countenance, and never give way to levity in converſation, or thoſe freedoms which were unbecoming his ſacred office, however allowable they might be to perſons of a different order: but he knew how to ſweeten and manage his temper, ſo as never to degenerate into an afflicted ſolemnity, or inconverſible auſterity: but was uſually extremely cheerful and facetious in his converſation, which made it univerſally agreeable, and added to the eſteem of a miniſter, the endearments of a friend and comrade: though indeed, which is generally the caſe in great ſpirits, there was in his temper an intermixture of thoughtfulneſs and melancholy, which ſometimes gained the ſuperiority, when the publick intereſts were endangered, and the enemies of Zion, which was his favourite concern, prevailed.

He uſed the innocent recreations and exerciſes which then prevailed, fiſhing, fowling and playing upon the ice, which at the ſame time contributed to preſerve a vigorous health, and while in frequent converſation with the beſt of the neighbouring gentry as theſe occaſions gave him acceſs to bear in upon them reproofs and inſtructions with an inoffenſive familiarity.

His ſtrong, and melodious voice, joined to a good ear, give him a great pleaſure in muſick, in the theory and practice of which he had a more than ordinary dexterity: and he failed not with mighty joy and ſatisfaction, to employ frequently his voice for the nobleſt uſe of it, the praiſes of his maker and Saviour, in which part of divine worſhip, his ſoul and body

body acted with an united and unwearied vigiour.

All the other amiable qualities that can give a luſtre to a man or a chriſtian, recommended this excellent perſon: his generoſity, hoſpitality, and charitable diſpoſition, were on all proper occaſions conſpicuous, and his modeſt humility gave a lovelineſs to his other virtues. Few men had greater temptations offered to pride and vanity: his natural and acquired abilities, great ſucceſs, eſtabliſhed reputation, and the applauſes of the whole country who admired him, were all dangerous flatterers, apt to beguile a man into a fond conceit of himſelf; but his lowlineſs of mind was proof againſt theſe pleaſing ſeducers, nor could they charm him into ſelf-ſufficiency and eſteem, for he had not ſo learned Chriſt, and that he poſſeſſed nothing, but what he had freely.

He excelled in another noble part of religion as well as humanity, an affectionate ſympathy with ſuch as were expoſed either to outward afflictions, orheavier troubles of a diſquieted ſoul: for ſuch he had always a melting tenderneſs, and embraced every occaſion of ſuccouring and relieving them: his own experience filled them with pity for thoſe who were in like circumſtances, gave him, in ſome meaſure, what his great maſter hath always in an incomparably more exalted degree for poor ſinners, a fellow-feeling of their infirmities, and enabled as well as ſtirred him up to comfort them with the conſolations whereby God had refreſhed and ſolaced his own ſoul; and he was ever ſending up fervent prayers to the throne of grace in their behalf.

We have in the former part of this account of Mr. Guthrie, mentioned ſeveral of thoſe eminent miniſterial qualifications which he poſſeſſed, and made his character as a miniſter, equal to that which he ſo juſtly enjoyed as a man and a chriſtian.

In his youth he had been a hard ſtudent, and this gave him a value for all the branches of learning and an acquaintance with them: But above all, his favourite employed was the ſtudy of the holy ſcriptures,

ſcriptures, which he read often in the original languages; and out of this divine treaſure of ſpiritual knowledge he brought out as our ſaviour ſpeaks, things new and old, which were of the higheſt advantage to him when he came to the pulpit. As a thorough acquaintance with the Bible is the beſt way to make a good preacher; ſo this was one mean of that excellency in diſcourſes from the pulpit, for which Mr. Guthrie was ſo much celebrated: and indeed his ſermons had all the advantages which could be given them, by a clear explication of the text, obſervations and enlargements that were important and ſuitable to the ſubject, alluſions and illuſtrations adapted to the meaneſt capacities of his people, and at the ſame time to the dignity of the pulpit, and the honour of religion, which required a very uncommon talent; and then a lively and affecting application of the doctrines which he taught, to the conſciences of his hearers, with an admirable mixture of light and heat, calculated to inſtruct the ignorant, awaken the ſecure, and enliven the whole ſoul in the ways of God: and to conclude, ſermons ſo excellent in their compoſure, were delivered with a clear, ſtrong and well tuned voice, a graceful and vehement action, and eyes flowing with tears, which were circumſtances of no little advantage.

In prayer to God, Mr. Guthrie equalled, if not exceeded himſelf as a preacher: the higheſt ſeriouſneſs and fervency, an awe of the great God on his ſoul, and a lively faith in his fatherly goodneſs and care, together with an inward feeling of what he ſpoke, all remarkably accompanying his addreſſes to the throne of grace in ſuch a degree, that many who heard him were uſually melted into tears of affection, and exceedingly edified.

And to conclude, all his eminent qualities were ſanctified by the grace of God, and heightned by an unaffected piety, and delightful fellowſhip with God through Chriſt: under the ſhinings of whoſe countenance he habitually lived, and attained to a very

uncommon degree of ſpiritual-mindedneſs, of a heavenly frame and temper, and of joy and peace in believing, while he both lived and died in full aſſurance of faith.

We ſhall put an end of this imperfect account of the life and character of ſo eminent a perſon, by the teſtimonies of Mr. John Livingſtone miniſter at Ancrum, and Mr. Mathew Crawford miniſter at Eaſtwood, both his contemporaries, concerning him. The firſt in a manuſcript account which he wrote of the miniſters of his own time, hath what follows, "Mr William Guthrie, Miniſter at Finwick, was a "man of a moſt ready gift and plentiful invention, "with moſt appoſite compariſons, fit both to a- "waken and pacify conſciences; ſtraight and ſted- "faſt in the publick cauſe of Chriſt; he was a "great light in the weſt of Scotland. He was much "and often troubled with the gravel, whereof he "died. In another place he ſays, in his doctrine, "Mr. William Guthrie was as full and free as any "man in Scotland had ever been, which, together "with the excellency of his preaching gift, did ſo "recommend him to the affections of his people, "that they turned the corn field of his glebe to a "little town; every one building a houſe for his "family upon it, that they might live under the "drop of his miniſtry."

The other, Mr. Matthew Crawford, in his manuſcript hiſtory of the churchof Scotland, hath theſe words; "Mr. William Guthrie was a burning and "ſhining light, kept in after many others by the "favour of the old earl of Eglintoun, the chan- "cellor's father in law. He converted andconfirmed "many thouſand ſouls, and was eſteemed the "greateſt practical preacher in Scotland."

Mr. Rutherford in his letters hath ſome paſſages concerning Mr. Guthrie; but theſe being already publiſhed, it would be needleſs to tranſcribe any thing from them, nor ſhall we detain the reader by the character which Mr. Trail gives of Mr Guthrie from his own knowledge of him, ſince it may be found

found with more advantage in the preface which that worthy miniſter prefixed to the edition of this treatiſe publiſhed at London 1705, and ſince reprinted at Edinburgh.

Though few people have been in all reſpects better qualified to write upon practical ſubjects, yet the modeſt and diffident ſentiments, which Mr. Guthrie always entertained of himſelf, deprived the world of the great advantage they would have reaped from his ſermons and other compoſures of this nature, had he thought fit to make them publick. But to the no ſmall loſs of the church, this excellent treatiſe is the only genuine performance of Mr. Guthrie which hath ſeen the light, the publication whereof was owing to another cauſe rather than to the inclination of the author, which was plainly enough forced, upon this occaſion. Some unknown perſon came by a copy of a few imperfect notes of ſome ſermons that Mr. Guthrie had preached upon the 55th of Iſaiah, with relation to perſonal covenanting; and without the ſmalleſt intimation of his deſign made to him, printed them in a ſmall pamphlet of 61 Pages, 12*mo*, under this title. *A clear attractive warming beam of light, from Chriſt the ſun of life, leading to himſelf; wherein is held forth a clear, ſound and eaſy way of a ſoul's particular cloſing with God, in the covenant of free grace, to the full ending and clearing all debates thereanent. Printed at Aberdeen by J. B.* 1657. The book indeed was anonymous, but Mr. Guthrie was reputed the author of it by the whole country, and ſo obliged to take notice of it: He was equally diſpleaſed at the vanity of the title, and the groſs defects of the work itſelf, which conſiſted of ſome broken notes of his ſermons confuſedly huddled together by an injudicious hand; and when he ſaw that it was the only remedy, he felt himſelf under a neceſſity, however uneaſy to him, to review his ſermons, from which he ſoon compoſed this admirable treatiſe.

There were indeed, after the reſtoration, ſome

ſermons of Mr. Guthrie's upon Hoſ. 13. 9. and a few other texts, printed from very imperfect notes, taken by a hearer, by ſome obſcure perſon, who wanted to make a little gain: but as thoſe could in no juſt ſenſe be accounted the work of Mr. Guthrie, being both extremely corrupt and defective, and were very injurious to his memory: Mr. Guthrie's his widow printed an advertiſement, and ſpread it as far as ſhe could, to guard the publick from being impoſed upon by thoſe ſpurious ſermons, which in a great meaſure put a ſtop to ſo unfair a practice: and ſhould in reaſon have prevented the diſingenuous extracts of ſome coarſe unguarded expreſſions from them, which are to be met with in ſome prelatical pamphlets, whereby they endeavour calumniouſly to expoſe the presbyterian intereſt, from the falſely alledged failures of one of its eminent guides and ſupporters.

This ſmall treatiſe, the chriſtian's great intereſt, the only genuine work of Mr. Guthrie, hath been bleſſed by God with wonderful ſucceſs in our own country, it was publiſhed very ſeaſonably, a little before the introduction of prelacy at the reſtoration; nor as the conduct of a merciful providence to be overlooked in affording ſo uſeful a help to multitudes of the people of God, when their worthy paſtors were torn from them. Severals have owed their converſion unto a religious life, to the reading of the treatiſe: and many thouſands have been thereby mightily edified and built up in the moſt holy faith.

Nor hath it leſs regard paid it abroad in England; its author and itſelf were highly eſteemed by the greateſt and beſt men there; and that there could not be a greater honour done it, than by the character given thereof by Dr. Owen, will appear to all who are acquainted with the incomparable learning and worth of that excellent ſcholar and divine; as we have the ſtory from a reverend miniſter of this church yet alive, who had the doctor's ſentiments from his own mouth. One day in converſation with him,

him, the doctor ſpeaking of Scotland, ſaid to our informer, "You have truly men of great ſpirits in "Scotland, there is for a gentleman, Mr. Bailie of "Jerviſwood, a perſon of the greateſt abilities, I "ever almoſt met with: and for divines," ſaid he pulling out of his pocket a little gilded copy of this treatiſe of Mr. Guthrie's, "That author I take to "have been one of the greateſt divines that ever "wrote; it is my Vademecum and I carry it, and the "Sedan New Teſtament ſtill about with me; I have "written ſeveral folios, but there is more divinity "in it than in them all." Though the great modeſty of this admirable divine, made him give a very unequal character of his own excellent performances, yet this does not hinder ſuch an account of Mr. Guthrie's book, given by ſo maſterly a judge from being as much for its reputation as any thing of that nature can be.

Nor was the uſefulneſs of this pious treatiſe confined, either to the author's own country or language: foreigners alſo valued it, tranſlated it, and were eminently profited thereby. It was tranſlated into low Dutch by the reverend and pious Mr. Koelman, and was highly eſteemed in Holland, ſo that Mrs Guthrie and one of her daughters met with uncommon civilities and kindneſs, when their relation to its author was known. It is alſo tranſlated into French and high Dutch: and we are informed, that it was alſo tranſlated into one of the eaſtern tongues, at the charges of that noble pattern of religion, learning and charity, the honourable Robert Boyle.

After what hath been ſaid of the intrinſick excellency of this uſeful book, it might perhaps appear both needleſs and aſſuming for us to pretend to give any further character of it, or recommend it to the eſteem and uſe of the publick.

THUS far the very learned and excellent Author of this preface had proceeded in it, when it pleaſed his Lord and maſter to call him to the everlaſting reward of his labours, to his own unſpeakable advantage, but to the great loſs of the church, and inexpreſſible grief of all his ſurviving friends.

But he having propoſed at his entring upon this preface, not only to give ſomeaccount of the author, which is all death has permitted him to do, but alſo to makeſome obſervations, uponthework itſelf: ſome thought the preface would be imperfect, if this likewiſe were not done. It is therefore here eſſayed, tho' with very unequal abilities.

This excellent treatiſe (which has been already ſo often publiſhed, tranſlated into foreign languages, and paſſed the courſeof more than ſixty years with univerſal applauſe) hath already its praiſes in the churches of Chriſt; and its juſt and univerſal eſteem ſo well ſettled, as to need no letters of commendation from any man, eſpecially from ſo obſcure a hand as mine; yet to give ſome account of the reaſons for which it has been ſo highly valued to thoſe who have never read it, to clear and confirm the grounds upon which it is founded the juſt eſteem of others who have already puruſedit to prevent the prejudices that may be entertained by ſome and a little to lay open the ſpirit of the author and its doctrine, that this treatiſe may be read with the more extenſive advantage by all; will, we hope not be unacceptable to any, but grateful and edifying to thoſe who are deſirous that the church and their own ſouls ſhould reap all poſſible advantage by ſuch books as are publiſhed.

The obſervations, that may be made upon this treatiſe, are either ſuch as concern the ſtile of it, or the doctrine contained in it, or elſe the author's way and manner of managing his ſubject, and the ſeveral branches of it.

As to the ſtile that would need but little apology though the book were appearing now for the firſt

time

time in the world; for, bating ſome few expreſſions, and theſe too occuring but ſeldom, that are now become ſomewhat obſolete, the words and phraſes uſed are juſt and grave, clear and ſignificant, level to the capacity of the meaneſt, and yet not below that of the greateſt. But conſidering that this treatiſe was written near ſeventy years ago, ſince which time our language has ſufferedgreat changes, the ſtile of it deſerves not only our acceptance, but even our high eſteem. It is plain, and yet decent, and adorned with all needful beauty; clear, and yet conciſe and comprehenſive; few books written in this country about that time are ſo pure in their ſtile: and this will be the more valued, if we remember what the author ſays in his Preface, That in this work he has "mainly, if not only ſtu-"died the advantage of the rude and ignorant;" for while he teaches theſe in a plain ſtile, he entertains even the learned that are ſerious, agreeably. So that whoſoever nauſeates this book for its ſtile, ſhews himſelf more of a critical than of a chriſtian ſpirit.

The beauty of the ſtile is exceeded, and even eclipſed, by the excellency of the matter which it contains: upon many obſervations which might be made, very uſeful and neceſſary to be remembered in theſe giddy times. The ſubject which he handles, is of all others, of the greateſt importance and moment to every man: it is the chriſtian's great intereſt, his greateſt intereſt indeed, his union with Chriſt the bleſſed Redeemer, and his title to the invaluable and glorious bleſſings of his purchaſe. The two parts of this great ſubject which he treats of are theſe which moſt nearly touch every Chriſtian, and which he is moſt called to bring to a clear and ſatisfying iſſue; how a perſon may try his intereſt in Chriſt, and how he may attain to it, and ſecure it? happy that man who can ſatisfy himſelf as to theſe.

In managing theſe heads of this diſcourſe, it is evident to every one who reads this treatiſe, that the author

author founds his doctrine upon the principles of that ſyſtem, which aſſerts free grace as the cauſe of our ſalvation, and of all that leads to it, theſe principles which were at firſt delivered to the ſaints in the holy ſcriptures, reſtored again with the ſcriptures at the glorious reformation from Popery, received into almoſt all the Confeſſions of Faith of the reformed churches, and fully aſſerted by the Synod of Dort, in oppoſition to Pelagian and Semipelagian errors. Upon this ſyſtem is founded the doctrine of this treatiſe, in which the author aſſerts or ſuppoſes particular election, effectual grace, man's natural inability to do what is ſpiritually good, Chriſt ſatisfying for the elect only, and the perſeverance of the ſaints: theſe principles plainly run thro' the whole work, and it is bottom'd upon them.

Yet at the ſame time nothing is omitted, that naturally could fall within ſuch a work, to inculcate the neceſſity of holineſs, and univerſal obedience to God's holy law. The freedom and fulneſs of the grace of Chriſt in the goſpel is ſo taught, as not to juſtle out the neceſſity of our own utmoſt diligence, and care to work out our own ſalvation with fear and trembling; it was not the author's buſineſs, in ſo ſmall and ſo practical a treatiſe, to ſhew explicitely the conſiſtency of theſe two together; he knew this was ſufficiently done in books of a controverſial nature: but holding to the doctrine of our excellent Weſtminſter Confeſſion, he ſo exalts free grace as not to invalidate the obligations of the moral law, he ſo aſſerts our natural corruption, as not to looſen our obligations to goſpel-obedience, and equally diſcourages free-will and merit on the one hand, and ſlothfulneſs and ſecurity on the other; and this not by direct aſſertions upon theſe heads, which are conſequentially overturned by contrary doctrines laid down in other places, as is done in ſome late books of Modern Divinity, but by aſſerting the principles upon which they depend.

Thus

Thus he does not, with ſome, exclude the word condition from the new covenant, as if there were a hazard of making God's own terms of his covenant too neceſſary, and ſome danger of binding them too faſt upon the ſouls of his people: but with our Larger Catechiſm, he frequently makes uſe of that word throughout the whole book, without apprehending any danger from it; and aſſerts oftner than once in the plaineſt and ſtrongeſt terms, that faith is the condition of the new covenant.

This faith he does not place, as ſome have done, in a firm perſuaſion that Chriſt died for us: nay he refutes this as a moſt dangerous and abſurd notion. But in the ſtating of the heart upon God in Chriſt, as a full bleſſing and ſatisfying portion, in the ſouls acquieſcence in the way of ſalvation by Chriſt; it is to accept of, and cloſe with God's device of ſaving ſinners by Chriſt Jeſus, held forth in the goſpel; and to cloſe with Chriſt in his kingly office, as he is anointed to be a king to rule over a man in all things. A notion of faith, which, as it exalts free grace, ſo it excludes the preſumption of hypocrites; and is fitted to prevent diſcouragements and deſpondency in the truly godly, and to excite to holineſs, by cauſing the ſoul to go forth towards God in Chriſt, and to follow hard after him as its chief good and happineſs; whereas the other groundleſs notion of it leads to the very reverſe of all theſe.

This pious and judicious author makes aſſurance of our intereſt in Chriſt, to be attainable, and that too, more eaſily than many ſerious chriſtians do imagine; yet he will by no means allow it to be of the eſſence of juſtifying faith, or inſeparable from it: on the contrary, he teaches, in the moſt expreſs terms, that many are truly gracious, and have a good title to eternal life, who do not know ſo much.

He aſſerts the freedom and univerſal extent of the goſpel-offer in the fulleſt terms declaring, That peace and ſalvation is offered to all without exception,

tion, That a man is not to queſtion God's willingneſs to receive men who go to Chriſt honeſtly: but does not think it neceſſary, for laying a foundation for this offer, to affirm, that Chriſt died for all men, as ſome others have imagined; nor torture himſelf to find out the ground of this general offer, till he has almoſt wrought himſelf in to the Arminian ſcheme. With him it was for the ſins of the elect that Chriſt ſatisfied, and this reſtriction of Chriſt's ſatisfaction, he did not judge inconſiſtent with an univerſal offer: but, with other orthodox divines, he judged, that the univerſal offer was the means for applying Chriſt's ſatisfaction to the perſons for whom it was ſpecially made; and that this glorious end of converting an elect world, together with God's extenſive command to his ſervants, Mat. xxviii. 19. was ſufficient ground to preach the goſpel to every man, without perplexing matters with new ſchemes, which, as it often happens, involves matters inſtead of explaining them.

Another thing obſervable in this excellent author, is his particular regard, throughout his whole treatiſe, unto God's holy law. As the promoting of holineſs, and a thorough converſion in Chriſtians, appears to be the great deſign of his work; ſo he does throughout the whole of it, maintain an inviolable reſpect for God's law, which is the rule and meaſure of it. He does not lay out himſelf (as ſome innovating writers on the ſame ſubject have done) to find out ſubtile diſtinctions of the word *law*, till he has almoſt diſtinguiſhed away the obligation of it. He makes the law a ſchool-maſter to lead us unto Chriſt; but then he does not lay it aſide, as an Almanac out of date, when it has brought us to him. Nay, he makes it one of the firſt breathings of the new nature, To acknowledge the law to be good, holy, juſt, and ſpiritual; to accept of Chriſt's whole yoke without exception; and to become a ſervant of righteouſneſs unto God: he makes the genuine fruit of the new life to be faith

faith working by love, which is the fulfilling of the law; and tells us, That the promiſes are made to faith followed with holineſs, which is the ſame with obedience to it.

Agreeably to this binding force of God's law, he every where excites and encourages Chriſtians to exert their moſt earneſt and vehement endeavours in the work of their ſalvation: he not only encourages believers, whoſe powers are by their converſion made active to diligence and induſtry; but he calls even unconverted ſinners, who are dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, to eſſay their duty, and diligently to apply themſelves to the practice of it, and gives them great encouragement to do ſo. He tells us, That tho' no words will take effect till God pour out his ſpirit; yet miniſters muſt ſtill preſs mens duty upon them, and charge them that they give the Lord no reſt till he ſend out that Spirit, which he will give to them that aſk it.

He teaches, That tho' none do cordially cloſe with God in Chriſt Jeſus, and acquieſce in that ranſom found out by God, except only ſuch as are elected, and whoſe hearts the Lord doth ſovereignly determine to that bleſſed choice; yet the Lord hath left it as a duty upon people who hear this goſpel, to cloſe with his offer of ſalvation, as if it were in their power to do it: and that the Lord, thro' theſe commands and exhortations, doth convey life and ſtrength and the new heart to the elect; and that it is his mind, in theſe commands and invitations, to put people to ſome duty, with which he uſes to concur for accompliſhing that buſineſs between him and them.

Yea further, anſwering the objection taken from our natural impotency to cloſe with Chriſt, he poſitively affirms, That if we eſſay to cloſe with Chriſt, and reſt on him for the offered ſalvation, God will not be wanting on his part, and that it ſhall not fail on his part, if we have a mind to the buſineſs. Thus he always takes care to keep an harmony betwixt the freedom and power of grace on the one hand,

hand, and the neceſſity and uſefulneſs of our own endeavours on the other; and while he owns our utter inability to do any thing that is ſpiritually good, he gives all encouragement that can be deſired to our own moſt earneſt endeavours.

To this ſame purpoſe it may be obſerved, that he formally exhorts to perſonal covenanting with God, and largely directs the management of it as a matter of great importance. He did not fear, as ſome, it ſeems, now do, that the ſoul ſhould be guilty of preſumption in dedicating itſelf with all ſolemnity to God in Chriſt, and in embracing the offered privilege of ſealing a ſure covenant with him; he doubted not but that particular perſons might do that acceptably, which bodies of men had ſo often done with great ſucceſs, and glorious tokens of God's preſence with them in holy ſcripture.

Thus it were eaſy to enlarge in making many obſervations upon the excellency and ſoundneſs of this author's doctrine; but it is now time to conclude with taking notice briefly, of this excellent author's way and manner of managing his ſubject, and delivering his doctrine. It is obvious to every one who reads him with attention, that he ſpeaks with a full underſtanding of his ſubject; he appears to have meditated deeply upon it, and to have digeſted fully the ſeveral particulars of it: all he ſays is of a piece and conſiſtent, he ſeems to have had the laſt words and all the intermediate parts of it in view when he wrote the firſt. He does not write as ſome others upon the ſame ſubject, have done looſely and incoherently: nor has he made up his book, as they have done theirs, of gathered ſcraps put together with little connection, and as little conſiſtency; nay he ſpeaks every where like one that is maſter of his ſubject. Yet he writes always with the utmoſt modeſty and caution; he does not impoſe his own experiences in religion, as abſolutely neceſſary to others, but allows a latitude for God's various ways of dealing

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with different perſons; how careſully does he guard his reader againſt miſtakes upon the ſeveral heads which he handles? he does not, as ſome have done, lay crude and unguarded aſſertions in one place, and truſt to the attention and judgment of his reader for correcting them by others laid down elſewhere: nay, he was ſenſible that not to miſlead is much better than to bring back thoſe who have wandered, not to poiſon than to adminiſter an antidote; and therefore under every head he pointedly guards and circumſcribes his ſubject.

He writes from his own experience: one may eaſily perceive the heart ſpeaking out its own experience almoſt in every line, and the author feeling, as well as underſtanding, his matter. At the ſame time he diſcovers the greateſt judgment and ſolidity in diſtinguiſhing things doubtful, from things certain; and things eſſential to the chriſtian life, from things extrinſic and circumſtantial to it; founding nothing upon chriſtian experience, but what has the countenance of holy ſcripture.

Thus we have in this little book a treatiſe upon that ſubject, which of all others is of the greateſt importance to a chriſtian, written in ſuch a manner as equally exalts free grace, and encourages goſpel-holineſs; and guarded with the greateſt exactneſs againſt the oppoſite extremes of preſumption and deſpondency: a treatiſe written with the utmoſt plainneſs, and yet with great ſolidity and judgment, with all the depth of a knowing and judicious divine, and the feeling of an experienced chriſtian. How happy had it been for the church, if none had undertaken to write practical treatiſes without theſe and the like qualities of this excellent author! how much for the growth of true religion in men's hearts and lives, if ſuch a plain and uſeful treatiſe as this, were as warmly recommended, and as carefully ſtudied, as others of a different character? It is in this edition attended with all the advantages that

the publiſher could think of, to make it both uſeful and agreeable to the reader. The Lord himſelf grant it may further anſwer its noble end of converting and confirming ſouls, and in all reſpects yield much fruit to his honour.

The following Account of the Reverend Mr William Guthrie *is faithfully tranſcribed from that Laborious and Worthy Divine Mr.* Rober Wodrow, *in his Hiſtory of the ſufferings of the Church of* Scotland, *and is as follows.*

MR. William Guthrie, miniſter at Finwick in the ſhire of Air, uſed the greateſt of freedom and ſincerity in his ſermons at this time. I am too nearly concerned in this great man, to ſay much about him, and therefore chooſe to give this in the words of a worthy miniſter, his contemporary, in his character of him. "In his doctrine Mr. William Guthrie was as full and free as any man in Scotland had ever been; which together with the excellency of his preaching gift, did ſo recommend him to the affections of people, that they turned the corn-field of his glebe to a little town, every one building a houſe for his family upon it, that they might live under the drop of his ordinances and miniſtry." Indeed the Lord gave him an opportunity to bear a longer teſtimony againſt the defections of this time, than moſt of his brethren; till at length the malice of the archbiſhop of Glaſgow turned him out in the year 1664, as we may hear.

Congregational fasts kept.

A good many ministers kept congregational fasts; and that was all almost they could do, since now there was scarce any opportunities of presbyterial or synodical appointments of this nature: and in some places where there were disaffected persons to delate them, ministers suffered not a little for this practice, and the plainness of their doctrine.

The other instance I promised as to the sufferings of old ministers this year, is that of the reverend, and singularly useful Mr. Guthrie, minister of the gospel at Finwick. This extraordinary person I have particular opportunities to have certain and distinct accounts of. I heartily wish some proper hand would give the public a just narrative of this great man's life, which might, I persuade myself, be very useful, The broken hints we have, before the last edition of his excellent saving interest, at London, 1705, are lame and indistinct, and were writ without the knowledge of his remaining relations, who could have given more just and larger accounts: I shall therefore here give the more particular history of his sufferings at the time, and his being forced to part with his dear flock.

He continues at his work longer than many others.

By the interest of several noblemen and others, to whom Mr. Guthrie was very dear, he enjoyed a connivance, and was overlooked for a considerable time, when he continued at his master's work, tho' in his sermons he was more than ordinarily free and plain.

When biſhop Burnet comes to Glaſgow, he and ſome other miniſters are attacked.

But ſoon after Dr. Alexander Burnet was brought from the ſee of Aberdeen to that of Glaſgow, he and the few remaining miniſters about him were attacked: ſuch as, Mr. Livingſtone at Biggar, Mr. M'Kail at Bothwel, Mr. Gabriel Maxwell at Dundonald, Mr. Gabriel Cunningham at Dunlop, and Mr. Andrew Hutcheſon and Mr. William Caſſilelaw, miniſters at Stewarton; and perhaps the chancellor's death about this time, helped to pave the way for the greater ſeverity againſt theſe worthy perſons.

Nothing prevails with the archbiſhop to ſpare Mr. Guthrie.

The archbiſhop had been addreſſed by ſome of the greateſt in the kingdom in behalf of Mr. Guthrie, and treated them very indiſcreetly: by no importunity would he ſuffer himſelf to be prevailed upon to ſpare him any longer. When means and interceſſions could not prevail, Mr. Guthrie was warned of the archbiſhop's deſign againſt him, and adviſed by perſons of note, his friends to ſuffer no reſiſtance to be made to his diſpoſſeſſion of the church and manſe: ſince his enemies wanted only this for a handle to proſecute him criminally for his zeal and faithfulneſs in the former times: ſuch was their ſpite againſt this uſeful man of God.

Wedneſday, July 20th kept as a congregational faſt with his people.

Under the proſpect of parting with his beloved people, Wedneſday the 20th of July this year was ſet apart by him for faſting and prayer with his congre-

congregation. The text he preached from was Hoſ. xiii. 9. *O Iſrael thou haſt deſtroyed thyſelf.* His ſermon was afterwards printed very unfairly and indiſtinctly, from an uncorrect copy. From that ſcripture, with great plainneſs and affection, he laid before them their ſins and thoſe of the land, and of that age; and indeed [illegible] place was a Bochim.

He preaches the next Lord's day early in the morning, and takes leave of his people.

At the cloſe of that day's work, he gave intimation of ſermon upon the next Lord's day very early, and his own people and many others met him at the church of Finwick betwixt four and five in the morning, where he preached twice to them from the cloſe of his laſt text, *But in me is thine help;* and as he uſed upon ordinary Sabbaths, he had two ſermons and a ſhort interval betwixt them and diſmiſſed the people before nine in the morning. Upon this melancholy occaſion, he directed them unto the great fountain of help, when the goſpel and miniſters were taken from them; and took his leave of them, commending them to this great God, who was able to build them up, and help them in the time of their need.

No violence uſed againſt the party who came to diſpoſſeſs him.

His people would willingly have ſacrificed all that was dear to them, in defence of the goſpel, and adhering to him. Indeed Mr. Guthrie had ſome difficulty to get their affection to him ſo far moderated, as to keep them from violent proceedings againſt the party who came to diſpoſſeſs him: [illegible] would have effectually prevented the [illegible]

it being declared vacant, and were ready to have reſiſted even to blood, ſtriving againſt ſin, if they had been permitted. But Mr. Guthrie's peaceable diſpoſition, his great regard to lawful civil authority, with his prudent foreſight of the conſequences of ſuch a procedure, both as to the intereſts of the goſpel, his people, and himſelf, made him lay himſelf out, and uſe the intereſt he had in the people, which was very great, to keep the peace; and there was no diſturbance which could be made a handle of by adverſaries.

With much difficulty the archbiſhop gets one to intimate his ſentence againſt Mr. Guthrie.

When the archbiſhop of Glaſgow reſolved upon diſpoſſeſſing him, he dealt with ſeveral of his curates, to intimate his ſentence againſt Mr. Guthrie, and as many refuſed it. There was an awe upon their ſpirits, which ſcared them from meddling with this great man; beſides, they very well knew it was an action would render them for ever odious to the weſt country, and they feared the conſequence. At laſt he prevailed with one who was curate of Calder, as I am told, and promiſed him five pounds Sterling for his reward: but, poor man! it was the price of blood, the blood of ſouls, and neither he nor his had much ſatisfaction in it.

The curate of Calder intimates it, July 24. in the church of Finwick.

Upon the 24th of July, this man came with a party of twelve ſoldiers to Finwick church on the Lord's day, and, by commiſſion from the archbiſhop, diſcharged Mr. Guthrie to preach any more at Finwick, declared the church vacant, and

ſuſpended

ſuſpended him from the exerciſe of his miniſtry.

And to himſelf in the Manſe.

The commander of the party and curate, leaving the ſoldiers without, came into the manſe, or miniſter's houſe. The beſt account I can at this diſtance give of what paſſed in the houſe, is by inſerting a ſhort minute of this, left among the ſmall remains of a valuable collection of papers belonging to Mr. Guthrie; which were taken away, as we ſhall afterwards hear, ſome years after this, by violence, and againſt all the rules of equity, from his widow, and fell into the hands of the biſhops. The paper was drawn up at the time to keep up the remembrance of this affair, without any deſign of its being publiſhed, and I give it in its own native and plain dreſs.

The ſum of the Curate's diſcourſe when he came and intimated Mr. William Guthrie *his ſentence of ſuſpenſion, with Mr.* Guthrie's *anſwer to him.*

An account of what paſſed in the Manſe.

THE Curate ſhewed, that the biſhop and committee after much lenity ſhewn to him for a long time, were conſtrained to paſs the ſentence of ſuſpenſion againſt him, for not keeping of preſbyteries and Synods with his brethren, and his unpeaceableneſs in the church; of which ſentence he was appointed to make public intimation to him, for which he read his commiſſion under the archbiſhop of Glaſgow his hand.

Mr. Guthrie anſwered, I judge it not convenient to ſay much in anſwer to what you have ſpoken: only

only, whereas you alledge there hath been much lenity used towards me, be it known unto you, that I take the Lord for party in that, and thank him for it; yea, I look upon it as a door which God opened to me for preaching this gospel, which neither you nor any man else was able to shut, till it was given you of God, and as to that sentence passed against me, I declare before these gentlemen, (the officers of the party) that I lay no weight upon it, as it comes from you, or those who sent you, though I do respect the civil authority, who by their law laid the ground for this sentence: and were it not for the reverence I owe to the civil magistrate, I would not surcease from the exercise of my ministry for all that sentence. And as to the crimes I am charged with, I did keep presbyteries and synods with my brethren; but I do not judge those who now sit in these to be my brethren, but men who have made defection from the truth and cause of God; nor do I judge those to be free or lawful courts of Christ, that are now sitting. And as to my unpeaceableness, I know I am bidden follow peace with all men, but I know also I am bidden follow it with holiness; and since I could not obtain peace without prejudice to holiness, I thought myself obliged to let it go. And as for your commission, sir, to intimate this sentence, I here declare I think myself called by the Lord to the work of the ministry, and did forsake my nearest relations in the world, and give up myself to the service of the gospel in this place, having received an unanimous call from this parish, and being tried and ordained by the presbytery; and I bless the Lord he hath given me some success, and a seal of my ministry upon the souls and consciences of not a few that are gone to heaven, and of some that

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are yet in the way to it. And now, sir, if you will take it upon you to interrupt my work among this people, as I shall wish the Lord may forgive you the guilt of it, so I cannot but leave all the bad consequences that follow upon it betwixt God and your own conscience. And here I do further declare before these gentlemen, that I am suspended from my ministry for adhering to the covenants and work of God, from which you and others have apostatized.

Here the curate interrupting him, said, that the Lord had a work before that covenant had a being, and that he judged them apostates who adhered to that covenant; and that he wished that not only the Lord would forgive him (Mr. Guthrie) but, if it were lawful to pray for the dead, (at which expression the soldiers did laugh) that the Lord would forgive the sin of this church these hundred years past.

It is true answered Mr. Guthrie, the Lord had a work before that covenant had a being; but it is as true that it hath been more glorious since that covenant, and it is a small thing for us to be judged of you in adhering to that covenant, who have so deeply corrupted your ways, and seem to reflect on the whole work of reformation from popery these hundred years past, by intimating that the church had need of pardon for the same.

As for you gentlemen, added he, directing himself to the soldiers, I wish the Lord may pardon you for countenancing of this man in this business. One of them scoffingly replied, I wish we never do a greater fault. Well, said Mr. Guthrie, a little sin may damn a man's soul.

Mr.

Mr. Guthrie's civilities to the soldiers

When this had passed, Mr. Guthrie called for a glass of ale, and craving a blessing himself, drank to the commander of the soldiers, and after they had been civilly entertained by him, they left the house. I have it confidently reported, that Mr. Guthrie at parting did signify to the curate, that he apprehended some evident mark of the Lord's displeasure was abiding him, for what he was now a doing, and seriously warned him to prepare for some stroke a coming upon him very soon.

The curate died in a little after.

Mr. Guthrie's relations, and a worthy old minister yet alive when I write this, who was that day at Finwick with him, from whom I have part of this account, do not mind to have heard any thing of this denunciation; but it might have been without their hearing, since none of them were present at parting. Whatever be in this, I am well assured the curate never preached more after he left Finwick. He came in to Glasgow, and whether he reached Calder, but four miles from it, I know not; but in few dayes he died in great torment of an illiac passion, and his wife and children died all in a year, or thereby: and none belonging to him were left: so hazardous a thing it is to meddle with Christ's sent servants.

The kirk declared vacant.

When they left the manse, the curate went into the church of Finwick with the soldiers his guard, and now his hearers, and preached to them not a quarter of an hour, and intimated from the pulpit the bishop's

biſhop's ſentence againſt Mr. Guthrie. No body came to hear him, but the party who came with him, and a few children and boys, who created him ſome diſturbance, but were chaſed off by the ſoldiers.

Mr. Guthrie continues in the pariſh till October 1665, when he died in Angus.

Mr. Guthrie continued in the pariſh, but preached no more in the church, where, as far as I can learn, there was no curate ever ſettled. Upon the 10th of October next year, this excellent perſon died in Angus, whither he went to ſettle ſome affairs relating to his eſtate of Pitforthy there. Thus by the malice of the prelates, this bright and eminent light of the weſt of Scotland was put under a buſhel, yea extinguiſhed.

Mr. William Guthrie dies, October 10.

By this time many of the old preſbyterian miniſters, who had ſeen the glory of the former temple, were got to their reſt. The 10th day of October this yet, brought the reverend Mr. William Guthrie to his father's houſe: I ſhall only add the remark made upon his lamented death, by the worthy miniſter his contemporary, whom I cited before, when I ſpoke of him. "This "year the preſbyterians in Scotland loſt one of "their pillars, Mr. Willam Guthrie miniſter of "the goſpel at Finwick, one of the moſt eloquent, "ſucceſsful, popular preachers, that ever was in "Scotland. He died a ſufferer, for he was de-"poſed by the biſhop, but in hopes, that one day "the Lord would deliver Scotland from her thral-"dom." Many others of the old miniſters of this church

church died about this time in peace, being taken away from the evil to come, which was fast coming on in great measures, and departed under the the solid and firm hope of a glorious deliverance coming to this poor church.

A Recommen-

A Recommendatory PREFACE *by the late Rev. Mr.* ROBERT TRAILL.

THIS little book having paſt ſo many impreſſions, both in Scotland and England within the laſt fifty years, (for it is near that time ſince it firſt was printed) and being commended by the acceptance of the ſaints, needeth nothing more, eſpecially from ſo obſcure a hand, to recommend it. But having known the author, I would willingly acquaint the world with ſomewhat of his character, after one hint about his book. It is to this author we owe the firſt motion of perſonal-covenanting with God. We have heard more, far-more of making national-covenants for reformation: and of church-covenants for mutual goſpel-followſhip, than we have ſeen of the keeping of them. But Mr Guthrie firſt wrote of perſonal covenanting, as far as ever I can learn; and that, not till he had conſulted many both miniſters and chriſtians. He having opened the door, ſeveral have followed, but *non paſſibus aequis*; and by the length and artificial method in their ſchemes of ſuch covenants, have put the practiſers thereof in no ſmall danger of running the matter into a dry formality, the bane of all holy things. But it is plain that this author deſigned nothing in this ſhort form of words but to cloſe the act of ſaving faith in Chriſt, in ſuch expreſſions as ſuit the experience of every believer.

Mr. William Guthrie, was the eldeſt ſon of a country-gentleman in the ſhire of Angus in Scotland, of a good family, and of a competent eſtate. After he had paſt his courſe of philoſophy at the univerſity of St. Andrews, he went to the new college there, where theology and the Hebrew are taught by ſeveral profeſſors. And it was then no

rare thing, for young gentlemen that had no deſign of engaging themſelves in any of the three learned profeſſions, of law, phyſic, or divinity, to ſpend ſome time at that college. Then, and there, it pleaſed the Lord, who had ſeparated him from his mother's womb, to call him by his grace, by the miniſtry of excellent Mr. Samuel Rutherford, and this young gentleman became one of the firſt-fruits of his miniſtry at St. Andrews. His converſion was begun with great terrors of God on his ſoul, and was compleated with that joy and peace in believing, that did accompany him through his life. Upon this bleſſed change wrought in him, he did immediately reſolve to obey the call of God, to ſerve him in the miniſtry of the goſpel, which was given him with the Lord's calling him effectually to grace and glory. And he did for this end ſo diſpoſe of his outward eſtate (of which he was born heir) as not to be entangled with the affairs of this life. After ſome time ſpent in ſtudy, he was called to preach, and quickly after was ſettled in a congregation in the weſt of Scotland, and did ſhine in that place, till a few months before his death, that he was driven away by perſecution, in 1665. In this place, he labour'd with great diligence, and with no leſs ſucceſs, as himſelf owned to the Lord's praiſe, when he ſaid that there was hardly any under his charge, but were brought to make a fair profeſſion of godlineſs, and had the worſhip of God in their families: and it was well known, that many of them were ſincere, and not a few of them, eminent chriſtians. The love he had to his people, made him ſtifly refuſe all calls and invitations to Glaſgow or Edinburgh, or Stirling, (where his own couſin, grave Mr. James Guthrie was miniſter, (afterwards Chriſt's faithful martyr

martyr, whom I ſaw die in and for the Lord, at Edinburgh, June 1ſt 1661). and pleaded much in a general aſſembly, that he might have his miniſtry in that city, which was malignant and profane at that time:) but all to no purpoſe. In this place, tho' an obſcure one, but by his miniſtry he ſpent all his few days, I have heard ſeveral judicious miniſters and chriſtians obſerve this of him, that, whereas many worthy miniſters have outlived their zeal, the vigour of their gifts, and their acceptance with the godly, this bleſſed man rather increaſed in all theſe to the laſt.

His ſtature was tall and ſlender, his aſpect grave. His natural temper was cheerful, witty and facetious, yet temper'd with gravity becoming a miniſter of Chriſt. I have ſeen ſomewhat of this rare mixture in him myſelf, and have heard from many who have had a great intimacy with him, that they have admired this in him, that immediately after his recreations, and ſingular ſallies of wit and innocent mirth, when called to pray, he would ſpeak to God with that holy awe, and faith, and love, and life, as if he had come down from the mount.

His gifts were great, ſtrong natural parts, a clear head, and a ſound heart. His voice was of the beſt ſort; loud, and yet managed with charming cadencies and elevations. His oratory ſingular, and by it he was maſter of the paſſions of his hearers. His action in preaching was more than ordinary; yet was it all decent and taking in him. I have oft thought him in this the likeſt to the famous Mr John Rogers, of Dedham in Eſſex, by the character I had of him by many; and eſpecially from his kinſman, Mr. William Jenkyn, who died Chriſt's priſoner in Newgate, 1684.

In preaching, praying, dealing with diſtreſs'd conſciences, and in pleading for the cauſe of God in the aſſemblies of miniſters; he was eminent and generally ſo eſteemed in his day, which I do well remember.

I have heard many paſſages of God's preſence with him, and of his bleſſing of his labours, which I forbear to mention; both becauſe it is unfit to give a long preface to a ſhort book: and becauſe I am not without hope, that ſome will think it fit to make this great man better known.

The main humbling thing, that attended him, (next to the apoſtaſy in the land, and cruel perſecution of the church of Chriſt in it) was a crazy body, afflicted much with the ſtone, and at laſt with an ulcer in his kidneys, which brought him to his grave, in 1665, when he had lived little above forty two years.

This was the man that the rulers in Scotland could not then bear: but tho' the love and eſteem that moſt of the neighbouring nobility and gentry bare to him did prevail, for a year or two, to preſerve him in his place, after many of his brethren were caſt out; yet at length a party of the king's guards, was ſent to turn him out, and to put a ſtranger in his place. Unto which violence, he gave way; and went on a viſit to his friends, where he was quickly ſeiz'd with a fit of his diſtemper, and died in 1665, in Auguſt. I have oft ſeen him, converſed with him, and have heard him preach; and if my youth then did make me an unfit judge of his real great worth, yet his name was ſo famous, his miniſtry ſo followed, eſpecially in his laſt two or three years, by many ejected miniſters, and ſo many deſolate congregations, (and both were multiplied in fatal 1662) that I do but declare what was

was then the common ſenſe of thouſands in Scotland, that Mr. Guthrie was every way an eminent goſpel miniſter. I had alſo a ſpecial advantage for knowing the ſpirit of this great man. My own honoured father and he, kept for many years a conſtant weekly correſpondence by letters; many of which Mr. Guthrie to my father I did peruſe, and ſeveral of them I have ſtill by me, writ by his own hand.

This was the great man the author of this ſmall book; and it is all that he ever publiſhed. Some ſmall ſcraps of ſome of his ſermons, I have ſeen in print, publiſhed many years after his death, by ſome honeſt, but unjudicious hand that declare little of the true ſpirit of the author. This much I have ſaid at a ſlender deſire of the reprinter of the book, as judging it both my duty and my honour, to declare what I have ſeen and heard of this excellent perſon. And if any think ſtrange, that I, who am none of the oldeſt of men, can ſo freely give a character of a perſon who hath been near forty years dead; I can tell them, that beſides the commonneſs of this ſame judgment of him, which thouſands, in the weſt of Scotland to this day (of whom many will cenſure this account as very lame and defective) I have on record by me in writting for ſeveral years, ſome ſingular things concerning him, which I forbear to publiſh.

London, Jan. 30. 1704-5. } *ROB. TRAILL.*

An Epiſtle Commendatory, from a Chriſtian Friend, giving an account of his thoughts upon peruſal of this Book.

Chriſtian Friend.

I Have ſent you by the bearer this book, which by providence came to my hand, and a bleſſed providence it was to me; for I hope the ſame mercy that brought it to my hand, hath brought the Savour of it to my heart.

Upon peruſal of it, I find ſuch a bleſſed and happy connection betwixt the gifts and the graces of the Spirit, ſuch an holy and humble condeſcenſion to my plain capacity, ſuch a ſerious handling of ſerious truths, that the language of my heart upon peruſal of it, was ſomewhat like that of the woman of Canaan, Joh. iv. 29. *Come ſee a man which told me all things that ever I did*; or rather, all that God hath done in me, and for me. He that hath waded much in the water of ſoul trouble, may here behold a lively deſcription of the ſpirit of bondage in all its terrors and troubles: and he who is got out of theſe, and is ſunning his ſoul in the light of God's countenance, may here behold the light ſide of the cloud; I mean the ſpirit of adoption, in all its beautiful colours.

The firſt part of this book ſets forth the ſoul in a ſtorm, when the law comes thundering to the conſcience; the laſt leads it into a calm of ſweet peace and ſerenity, when the Spirit of God comes to a troubled ſoul, as the Son of God once came to the troubled ſea, with a *Peace, be ſtill*, Matth. xiv. 29. But if it ſhould not be thus, the believer is here directed to be willing to want what God is not willing to give; and to know, he is wiſe to give when he will, that he will, and how he will. I find now, that peace ſown is for the righteous, Pſal. lxvii. 11. But all do not reap the crop till they come into Immanuel's land, Iſ. vii. 8. There our joy, as well as our light, ſhall be clear, and our love perfect.

And if there be any more concerned in this piece than others, (though it deals forth its bread to all its young men and young converts): the latter may here

here behold as in a map or mirror, the ſeveral providences, and various workings of the bleſſed Spirit, that have all concurred in bringing them home to God; and may take notice of all the inducements and remoras they met with in the way; as Moſes was to write a hiſtory of the children of Iſrael *paſſing through the wilderneſs*, Numb. xxxiii. 2. So doth this book, which is a holy kind of elegancy, deſcribe the Spirit's leading the ſoul out of its bewildered eſtate, into the ſpiritual Canaan, never leaving it, till it come to the mountain of ſpices, Song viii. 14. out of Satan's gun ſhot, where his habitation ſhall be the munition of rocks, Iſ. xxxvi. 16. Neither is there one path omitted, ſo far as I could ever read, or gather from my own or others experience; ſo that it may not unfitly be termed, "A ſpiritual day-book of all "the paſſages between the Spirit of God and the "ſoul, in its regeneration work;" which is no leſs profitable than delightful for the believer, to be reading over the records of God's love manifeſted in the goſpel; what care and coſt he took with him, to recover him out of the gall of bitterneſs, and bond of iniquity; for trial brings truth to light, and thoſe things, which thro' many clouds intercepting may have loſt their remembrance in the ſoul, are here clearly diſcovered that they have been; although for the preſent the believer cries out, *How is the gold become dim! how is the fine gold changed!* And the looking over paſt experience brings a renewed ſavour, and a ſpiritual reliſh of thoſe things upon the heart to them who have thus taſted that the Lord is good; at leaſt ſupports the ſoul under the want of ſenſible feeling, whilſt it calls to *remembrance the days of old, the years of God's right hand*. But I have done, and yet methinks I can never write enough of the excellency and utility of this piece, the Lord make it ſo profitable to others, as it hath been to me. To his bleſſing I leave both you and it, and remain,

Your true Chriſtian friend,

G. B

Chriſtian READER,

WHile the generality of men, eſpecially in theſe days, by their eager purſuit after low and baſe intereſts, have proclaimed as upon the houſe tops, how much they have forgotten to make choice of that better part, which, if choſen, ſhould never be taken from them; I have made an eſſay, ſuch as it is, in the following treatiſe, to take thee off from this unprofitable, though painful, purſuit, by propoſing the chiefeſt of intereſts, even the chriſtian's great intereſt, to be ſeriouſly pondered and conſtantly purſued by thee. Thou mayſt think it ſtrange to ſee any thing in print from my pen, as indeed it is a ſurpriſe to myſelf: but neceſſity hath made me for this once to offer ſo much violence to my own inclination, in regard that ſome, without my knowledge, have lately publiſhed ſome imperfect notes of a few of my ſermons, moſt confuſedly caſt together, prefixing withal this vain title, as diſpleaſing to myſelf as the publiſhing of the thing, A clear attractive warming beam, &c. Upon this occaſion, was I prevailed with to publiſh this little piece wherein I have purpoſely uſed a moſt homely and plain ſtile, leſt otherwiſe (though when I have ſtretched myſelf to the utmoſt, I am below the judicious and more underſtanding) I ſhould be above the reach of the rude and ignorant, whoſe advantage I have mainly, if not only conſulted; I have likewiſe ſtudied brevity in every thing, ſo far as I have conceived it to be conſiſtent with plainneſs and perſpicuity; knowing that the perſons to whom I addreſs myſelf herein, have neither much money to ſpend upon books, nor much time to ſpare upon reading. If thou be a rigid critic, I know thou mayeſt meet with ſeveral things to carp at, yet aſſure thyſelf I had no deſign to offend thee, neither will thy ſimple approbation ſatisfy me; it is thy edification I intend, together with the incitement of ſome others more expert and experienced in this excellent ſubject, to handle the ſame at greater length, which I have more briefly hinted at, who am.

Thy Servant in the Work of the Goſpel,

WILLIAM GUTHRIE.

THE CHRISTIAN's Great Intereſt.

THE *INTRODUCTION.*

SINCE there be ſo many people living under the ordinances, pretending without ground to a ſpecial intereſt in Chriſt, and to his favour and ſalvation, as is clear, Matth. vii. 22, 23. 'Many will ſay to me in that day, Lord, 'Lord, have we not propheſied in thy name? 'And in thy name have caſt out Devils? And 'in thy name done many wonderful works; 'And then will I profeſs unto them, I never 'knew you: depart from me ye that work i-'niquity.' Matth. xxv. 11, 12. 'Afterward 'came alſo the other virgins, ſaying, Lord, 'Lord, open to us: but he anſwered and ſaid, 'Verily I ſay unto you, I know you not.' Luke xiii. 24. 'Strive to enter in at the ſtrait gate; 'for

'for many, I ſay unto you, will ſeek to enter 'in, and ſhall not be able.' And ſince many who have good ground of claim to Chriſt, are not eſtabliſhed in the confidence of his favour, but remain in the dark, without comfort, heſitating concerning the reality of godlineſs in themſelves, and ſpeaking little to the commendation of religion to others, eſpecially in the time of their ſtraits; I ſhall ſpeak a little to two things of greateſt concernment. The one is, "How a perſon ſhall know if he hath a true "and ſpecial intereſt in Chriſt, and whether he "doth lay juſt claim to God's favour and ſal-"vation?" The other is, "In caſe a perſon "fall ſhort in the foreſaid Trial, what courſe "he ſhall take for making ſure God's friend-"ſhip and ſalvation to himſelf?"

PART

PART I.

The Trial of a ſaving Intereſt in CHRIST.

How ſhall a man know if he hath a true and ſpecial intereſt in Chriſt, and whether he hath or may lay claim juſtly to God's favour and ſalvation?

CHAP. I.

A man's intereſt in Chriſt may be known: it is a matter of the higheſt importance, and is to be determined by Scripture.

BEFORE we ſpeak directly to the queſtion, we ſhall premiſe ſome things to make way for the anſwer.

Firſt, That a man's intereſt in Chriſt, or his gracious ſtate, may be known, and that with more certainty than people do conjecture; yea, and the knowledge of it may be more eaſily attained unto than many do imagine: for, not only hath the Lord commanded men to know their intereſt in him, as a thing attainable, 2 Cor. xiii. 5. 'Examine yourſelves, whether 'ye be in the faith, &c.' 2 Pet. i. 10. 'Give 'diligence to make your calling and election 'ſure,' &c. But many of the ſaints have attained unto the clear perſuaſion of their intereſt in

in Chriſt, and in God as their own God; how often do they call him their God and their Portion, and how perſuaded is Paul, 'That 'nothing can ſeparate him from the love of 'God?' Rom. viii. 38, 39. Therefore the knowledge of a man's gracious ſtate is attainable.

And this knowledge of it, which may be attained, is no fancy and bare conceit, but it is moſt ſure; 'Doubtleſs thou art our Father,' ſaith the prophet in the name of the church, Iſa. lxiii. 16. It is clear thus, 1. That can be no fancy, but a very ſure knowledge, which doth yield to a rational man, comfort in moſt real ſtraits; but ſo doth this, 1 Sam. xxx. 6. 'When the people ſpake of ſtoning David, he 'encouraged himſelf in the Lord his God.' Pſal. iii. 6. he ſaith there, 'He will not be 'afraid of ten thouſands that riſe againſt him.' Compare theſe words with verſe 3. of that Pſalm, 'But thou, O Lord, art a ſhield for me: 'my glory and the lifter up of mine head,' Pſal. xxvii. 1, 3. 'The Lord is my light, and 'my ſalvation, whom ſhall I fear? The Lord 'is the ſtrength of my life, of whom ſhall I 'be afraid? Tho' an hoſt ſhould encamp a-'gainſt me, my heart ſhall not fear; tho' war 'ſhould riſe againſt me, in this will I be confi-'dent.' 2. That is a ſure knowledge of a thing which maketh a wiſe merchant ſell all he hath, that he may keep it ſure; that maketh a man forego children, lands, life, and ſuffer the ſpoiling of all joyfully: but ſo doth this,

Matt.

Matt. xiii. 44. Mark x. 28, 29. Heb. x. 34. Rom. v. 3. Acts v. 41. 3. That muſt be a ſure and certain knowlege, and no fancy, whereupon a man voluntarily and freely doth adventure his ſoul, when he is ſtepping in into eternity with this word in his mouth, 'This 'is all my deſire:' but ſuch a knowledge is this, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

And again, not only may a godly man come to the ſure knowledge of his gracious ſtate, but it is more eaſily attainable than many do apprehend: for, ſuppoſing what ſhall be afterwards proved, That a man may know the gracious work of God's Spirit in himſelf; if he will but argue rationally from thence, he ſhall be forced to conclude his intereſt in Chriſt, unleſs he deny clear Scripture-truths. I ſhall only make uſe of one here, becauſe we are to ſpeak more directly to this afterwards. A godly man may argue thus, Whoſoever receive Chriſt, are juſtly reputed the children of God,' John i. 12. 'But as many as received him, to them gave 'he power to become the ſons of God;' but I have received Chriſt all the ways which the word there can import; for I pleaſe the device of ſalvation by Chriſt, I agree to the terms, I welcome the offer of Chriſt in all his offices, as a King to rule over me, a Prieſt to offer and intercede for me, a Prophet to teach me; I lay out my heart for him, and towards him, reſting on him as I am able: what elſe can be meant by the word *receiving?* Therefore may I ſay and conclude plainly and warrantably, I

am juſtly to reckon myſelf God's child according to the foreſaid Scripture which cannot fail.

The ſecond thing to be premiſed, is, That a man be ſavingly in covenant with God, is a matter of higheſt importance, 'It is his life,' Deut. xxxii. 47. And yet very few have or ſeek after a ſaving intereſt in the covenant, and many fooliſhly think they have ſuch a thing without any ſolid ground, Matt. vii. 14. 'Few 'find or walk in the narrow way.' This ſhould alarm people to be ſerious about the matter, ſince it is of ſo great conſequence to be in Chriſt; and ſince there be but few that may lay juſt claim to him: and yet many do fooliſhly fancy an intereſt in him, who are deceived by a falſe confidence, as the fooliſh virgins do, Matth. xxv.

The third thing to be premiſed, is, Men muſt reſolve to be determined by Scripture in this matter of their intereſt in Chriſt. The Spirit ſpeaking in the Scripture is judge of all controverſies, Iſa. viii. 20. 'To the law, and to the 'teſtimony; if they ſpeak not according to 'this word, it is becauſe there is no light in 'them;' and of this alſo, Whether a man be ſavingly in covenant with God or not. Therefore do not mock God, whilſt you ſeem to ſearch after ſuch a thing. If we prove from Scripture, which is the uncontroverted rule, that you are gracious, and have ſtricken covenant ſavingly with God; then reſolve to grant ſo much, and to acquieſce in it: and if the contrary appear, let there be a determination of the

the controverſy, elſe you do but mock the Lord, and ſo 'your bands ſhall be made ſtrong,' Iſa. xxviii. 22. For, 'a jot of his word cannot 'fail,' Matt. v. 18. Therefore ſeek eye-ſalve from Chriſt to judge of things according as the word of God ſhall diſcover them to be.

CHAP. II.

Reaſons why ſo few come to the clear knowledge of their intereſt in Chriſt.

THE fourth thing to be premiſed, is, Although the matter of a man's intereſt in Chriſt be of ſo great importance, and the way to attain to the knowledge of it, ſo plainly held forth in the ſcriptures; yet there be but few who reach the diſtinct knowledge of it. And that this may not diſcourage any perſon from attempting it, I ſhall hint ſome few reaſons, why ſo few come to the clear knowledge of it; which will alſo prepare the way for what is to be ſpoken afterwards.

The firſt thing which doth hinder many from the knowledge of their intereſt in Chriſt, is their ignorance of ſome ſpecial principles of religion: as, 1. That it was free love in God's boſom, and nothing in man that moved him to ſend a Saviour to perfect the work of redemption, John iii. 16. 'God ſo loved the world, that 'he gave his only begotten Son.' Men are ſtill ſeeking ſome ground for that buſineſs in themſelves, which leads away from ſuitable and high apprehenſions of the firſt ſpring and riſe of God's

Covenant favour to his people which hath no reaſon, cauſe or motive in us; and ſo they cannot come to the knowledge of their Intereſt.

2. They are ignorant how that love doth effectually diſcover itſelf to a man's heart, ſo as he hath ground to lay claim to it, viz. That ordinarily it doth firſt diſcover his broken ſtate in himſelf becauſe of ſin and corruptions defiling the whole man, and any thing in him, that might be called a righteouſneſs; 'all theſe 'things are loſs and dung,' Phil. iii. 6, 7, 8. Secondly, It diſcovereth Chriſt as the full and ſatisfying treaſure above all things; 'The man 'finds a treaſure, for which, with Joy he ſel-'leth all,' &c. Mat. xiii. 44, 46. Thirdly, It determineth the heart, and cauſeth it to approach unto a living God in the ordinances, Pſal. lxv. 4. 'Bleſſed is the man whom thou 'chooſeſt and cauſeth to approach unto thee, 'that he may dwell in thy courts.' And cauſeth the heart to wait upon him, and him alone, Pſal. lxii. 5. 'My ſoul, wait thou only upon 'God.' Thus having dropped in the Seed of God in the heart, and formed Chriſt there, Gal. iv. 19. The heart is changedand made new in the foreſaid work, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. And God's law is ſo ſtamped upon the heart in that change, Jer. xxxi. 33. that the whole yoke of Chriſt is commended to the man without exception, Rom. vii. 12, 16. The law is acknowledged, good, holy, juſt and ſpiritual. Upon all which, from that new principle of life, there flow out acts of a new life, Gal. v. 6.

v. 6. 'Faith worketh by love. Rom, vi. 18, 22. And the man becometh 'a ſervant of 'Righteouſneſs, and unto God:' Which doth eſpecially appear in the ſpirituality of Worſhip, John iv. 24. Rom, vii. 6. Men then 'ſerve God 'in ſpirit and truth; and in the newneſs of the 'ſpirit, and not in the oldneſs of the letter;' and tenderneſs in all manner of converſation; the man then 'exerciſeth himſelf how to keep a 'conſcience void of Offence towards God, and 'towards Man,' Acts xxiv. 16. Now, this way doth the Love of God diſcover itſelf unto the Man and acteth on him, ſo as he hath ground of laying ſome good claim to it; ſo as he may juſtly think, that the love which ſent a Saviour, had reſpect to ſuch a Man as hath found theſe things made out to him. Surely Ignorance in this doth hinder many from the knowledge of their intereſt in Chriſt; for if a man know not how God worketh with a Perſon, ſo as he may juſtly lay Claim to his Love, which was from Eternity, he will wander in the Dark, and not come to the knowledge of an intereſt in him.

3. Many are alſo ignorant of this, That God alone is the hope of his people. He is called the hope of Iſrael, Jer. xiv. 8. Although inherent qualifications are evidences of it, yet the ſtaying of the heart upon him as a full bleſſing and ſatisfying portion is Faith, 1 Pet. i. 21. 'The 'faith and hope muſt be in God;' and the only proper condition which giveth right to the ſaving bleſſings of the covenant, Rom. 4. 5. 'To him 'that worketh not, but believeth——Faith is 'counted

'counted for Righteousness.' Indeed if any person take Liberty here, and turn Grace into wantonness, there is without doubt in so far, a delusion; since there 'is Mercy with him upon 'condition that it conciliate Fear to him,' Psal. 130. 4. Yea, hardly can any man who hath found the foresaid expressions of God's love made out upon him, make a cloke of the covenant for sinful Liberty, without some Measure of a spiritual Conflict; in this respect 'He that is born of God doth not sin; and 'he who doth so sin, hath not seen God,' 1 John iii. 6, 9. I say God is the hope of his people, and not their own Holiness. If they intend honestly, and long seriously to be like unto him, many failings should not weaken hope and confidence, for it is in him who changeth not, Mal. iii. 6. 'And if any man sinneth he hath an advocate,' 1 John ii. 1. Now when men place their hope in any other thing beside the Lord, it is no wonder they be kept in a staggering Condition, according to the changes of the thing which they make the ground of their hope, since they give not to God the glory due to his name, and which he will not give to another: Compare Psal. ix. 10. 'They 'who know thy Name, will put their Trust in 'thee,' with Isa. xlii. 8. 'My glory will I not 'give to another: I am the Lord, that is my 'Name.'

4. Many are ignorant of the different Ways, and degrees of God's, Working with his people, and this doth much darken their knowledge

ledge and reflex acts of their intereſt in him. This ignorance doth run mainly on three heads. 1. They are ignorant of the different degrees and ways of that law-work, which ordinarily dealeth with men, and of the different ways how the Lord bringeth home people at firſt to Chriſt. They conſider not that the Jaylor is not kept an hour in bondage, Acts xvi. Paul is kept in ſuſpence three Days, Acts ix. Zaccheus not one moment, Luke xix. 2. They are ignorant of, at leaſt do not conſider how different the degrees of ſanctification are in the ſaints, and the honourable appearings thereof before men in ſome; and the ſad blemiſhing thereof in others: ſome are very blameleſs and more free of groſs outbreakings, adorning their profeſſion much, as Job, Job. i. and Zacharias, Luke i. Theſe are ſaid to be 'Perfect and upright, fearing God 'and eſchewing Evil; righteous before God, 'walking in all the commandments and Ordi-'nances, of the Lord blameleſs:' Others were ſubject to very groſs and ſad evils as Solomon, Aſa, &c. 3. They are ignorant of the different communications of God's Face, and Expreſſions of his preſence: Some do walk much in the light of God's countenance, and are much in ſenſible fellowſhip with him, as David was; others are 'all their days kept in bondage thro' Fear of Death, Heb. ii. 15. Surely the Ignorance of the different ways of God's working and dealing with his people, doth very much darken the Knowledge of their intereſt in him, whilſt they uſually ſtint the Lord to one way

of Working, which he doth not keep, as we have ſhewed in the former examples.

The ſecond thing which doth darken men about their intereſt in Chriſt, is, There is one thing or other, wherein their heart, in ſome doth condemn them, as dealing deceitfully and guilefully with God: It is not be expected, that theſe can come to clearneſs about their intereſt, whoſe heart doth condemn them for keeping up ſome known tranſgreſſions againſt the Lord, which they will not let go, neither are uſing the means which they know to be appointed by God for delivering them from it: Neither can theſe come to clearneſs, who know ſome poſitive duty commanded them in their Stations, which they deceitfully ſhift and ſhun not cloſing cheerfully with it, or not willing to be led into it; theſe are alſo in ſome reſpect condemned of their own heart, as the former Sort; and in that caſe it is difficult to come to a diſtinct knowledge of their ſtate. 1 John 3. 21. 'If our heart condemn us not, then have we 'confidence towards God.' It is ſuppoſed there that a ſelf-condemning heart maketh void a man's confidence proportionably before God.

I do not deny but that men may, on good grounds, plead an intereſt in Chriſt, in the caſe of prevailing iniquity, Pſal. 65. 3. 'Iniquities prevail againſt me; as for our tranſ-'greſſions, thou ſhalt purge them away,' Rom. 7. 23, 24, 25. 'I ſee another law in my mem-'bers warring againſt the Law of my mind, 'and bringing me into captivity to the Law of

'Sin

'Sin which is in my members: O wretched 'man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from the 'body of this death? I thank God through 'Jeſus Chriſt our Lord; ſo then, with the 'mind myſelf ſerve the Law of God; but 'with the fleſh, the law of ſin.' But it is hard to be attained, if at all attainable, when the heart is dealing deceitfully, and entertaining known guile in a particular: therefore let people clear themſelves of the particular which they know too well. It is the thing which doth meet them, marring their confidence and acceſs in all their approaches unto God; ſee Judges x. 10, 13. The idolatries of the people are caſt up to them by the Lord, and their ſuit rejected thereupon. That which draweth away the heart firſt in the morning, and laſt at night, like 'an oven heated at Night, and it burneth as a 'flaming fire in the morning,' ſpoken of the wicked, Hoſ. vii. 6. andtaketh up their thoughts often on their bed; as it is ſaid of ſome, Pſal. xxxvi. 4. 'He deviſeth miſchief upon his Bed,' &c. That which doth lead away the heart in time of religious duty ordinarily and the remembrance of which hathpower to enliven and quicken the Spirits, more than the Remembrance of God, ſo as 'their heart is after the heart of 'ſome deteſtable thing,' Ezek. 11. 21. That which withſtandeth men when they would grip the promiſe, as God caſteth up men's Sins to them who are meddling with his covenant, Pſal. 50. 16, 17, 'What haſt thou to do to declare 'my Statutes, or that thou ſhouldeſt take my

'covenant

'covenant in thy mouth,' &c? That is the thing which doth mar the knowledge of a gracious ſtate; let it go, and it will be more eaſy to reach the knowledge of an intereſt in Chriſt.

The third thing which hindereth the knowledge of an intereſt in Chriſt, is a Spirit of ſloth, and careleſs negligence in many: they complain that they know not whether they be in Chriſt or not: But, as few take pains to be in him; ſo few take pains to try if they be in him. It is a work and buſineſs which cannot be done ſleeping, 2 Cor. xiii. 5. 'Examine 'yourſelves, whether ye be in the Faith; prove 'your ownſelves: know ye not your ownſelves,' &c? The ſeveral words uſed there, viz. Examine, prove, know, ſay that there is a labour in it; 'Diligence muſt be uſed to make our 'calling and election ſure,' 2 Pet. i. 10. It is a buſineſs above Fleſh and blood; the 'holy a-'nointing, which teacheth all things,' 1 John ii. 20, 27. 'muſt make us know the things 'freely given us of God,' 1 Cor. ii. 12. Shall the Lord impart a buſineſs of ſo great concernment, and not ſo much 'as be enquired after 'to do it for men? Ezek. xxxvi. 37, Be aſhamed, you who ſpend ſo much time in reading of romances in adorning your perſons, in hawking and hunting, in conſulting the law anent your outward eſtate in the world, and it may be in worſe things than theſe: be aſhamed that you ſpend ſo little time in the ſearch of this, whether you be an heir of glory or not; whether you be in the way that leadeth to heaven or

that

that way which will land you in darkneſs for ever. You who judge this below you, and unworthy of your pains, any part or minute of your time; it is like, in God's account, you have judged yourſelves unworthy of everlaſting life, ſo as you ſhall have no lot with God's people in this matter.

The fourth thing that doth darken the knowledge of an intereſt in Chriſt, is, Men do not condeſcend upon what would ſatisfy them; they complain that God will not ſhew them what he is about to do with them; but cannot yet ſay they know what would ſatisfy anent his purpoſe. This is a ſad thing. Shall we think thoſe are ſerious who have never, as yet, pitched on what would ſatisfy them, nor are making earneſt enquiry after what ſhould ſatisfy? If the Lord had left us in the dark in that matter, we were leſs inexcuſable: but ſince the grounds of ſatisfaction and the true marks of an intereſt in Chriſt, are ſo clear and frequent in ſcripture, and ſo many things written, 'that 'our joy may be full,' 1 John i. 14. And 'that 'thoſe who believe may know that they have 'eternal life,' 1 John v. 13. And ſince 'he 'that believeth hath a witneſs of it in himſelf,' 1 John v. 10. None can pretend excuſe here: we may not here inſiſt to ſhew what may and ſhould ſatisfy anent our intereſt, ſince we are to ſpeak directly to it afterwards.

The fifth thing that helpeth much to keep men in the dark anent their intereſt in Chriſt, is, They pitch upon ſome mutable grounds, which

which are not ſo appoſite proofs of the truth of an intereſt in Chriſt, as of the comfortable ſtate of a triumphing ſoul ſailing before the wind; and marks, which I grant are precious in themſelves, and do make out an intereſt clearly where they are; yet they are ſuch, as without which an intereſt in Chriſt may be, and be known alſo in a good meaſure: we ſhall touch a few of them.

1. Some think that all who have a true intereſt in him, are above the prevailing power of every ſin; but this is contrary to that of Pſalm lxv. 3. 'Iniquities prevail againſt me, as 'for our tranſgreſſions, thou ſhalt purge them 'away.' Where we find that holy man laying juſt claim to pardon, in the caſe of prevailing iniquity: and that of Rom. vii. 23, 24, 25. Where Paul 'thanketh God thro' Chriſt, as 'freed from the condemnation of the law, e-'ven whilſt a law in his members leadeth cap-'tive unto ſin.'

2. Some think that all true ſaints have conſtantly acceſs unto God in prayer, and ſenſible returns of prayer at all times; but this is contrary to the many ſad exerciſes of his people, complaining often that they are not heard nor regarded of God, Pſal. xiii. 1. 'How long 'wilt thou forget me, O Lord, for ever? 'How long wilt thou hide thy face from me?' Pſal. xxii. 1, 2. 'My God, my God, why haſt 'thou forſaken me? Why art thou ſo far 'from helping me, and from the words of my 'roaring? O my God, I cry in the day-time, 'but

'but thou heareſt not; and in the night-ſeaſon, 'and am not ſilent.'

3. Some think that all who have any true intereſt in him, have God witneſſing the ſame unto them by a high operation of that witneſſing Spirit of his ſpoken of, Rom. viii. 16. 'The Spirit itſelf beareth witneſs with our 'ſpirit, that we are the children of God.' Whereof afterwards: and ſo they ſtill ſuſpect their own intereſt in Chriſt, becauſe of the want of this; but they do not remember that they muſt firſt believe and give credit to that record, which God hath given of his Son, that there is life enough in him for men, 1 John v. 10, 11. And then look for the ſeal and witneſs of the Spirit, Eph. i. 13. 'In whom after 'ye believed, ye were ſealed with the holy 'Spirit of promiſe,' &c. As long as people hold faſt theſe principles and the like, they can hardly come to the knowledge of their gracious ſtate, which God hath warranted people to prove and clear up to themſelves, otherways than by theſe foreſaid things.

CHAP. III.

Some miſtakes concerning an intereſt in Chriſt removed.

THE fifth thing to be premiſed, is, The removal of ſome miſtakes whereinto people may readily run themſelves, when we are about to prove their intereſt in Chriſt.

As, 1. It is a miſtake to think, that every

one who is in Chriſt, doth know that he is in him; for many that are truly gracious, and have a good title to eternal life, who do not know ſo much, until it be made out afterwards, 1 John v. 13. 'Theſe things are writ-'ten to believers, that they may know they 'have a true title to eternal life;' that is, that they may know they are believers, and ſo it is ſuppoſed they knew it not before.

2. It is a miſtake to think, that all who come to the knowledge of their intereſt in Chriſt do attain an equal certainty about the ſame: one may ſay, 'He is perſuaded nothing 'preſent or to come can ſeparate him from the 'love of God,' Rom. viii. 38. Another cometh but this length, 'I believe, help my un-'belief,' Mark ix. 24.

3. It is a miſtake to think, that every one who attaineth a ſtrong perſuaſion of his intereſt, doth always hold there; for he who to day may ſay of the Lord, 'He is his refuge,' Pſal. xci. 2. and his portion, Pſal. cxix. 57. will at another time ſay, 'He is cut off,' Pſal. xxxi. 22. and will aſk if the truth of God's 'promiſe doth 'fail for ever more?' Pſal. lxxvii. 7, 8, 9.

4. It is alſo a miſtake to think, that every one who doth attain a good knowledge of their gracious ſtate, can formally anſwer all objections made to the contrary; but yet they may hold faſt the concluſion; and ſay, 'I know 'whom I have believed,' 2 Tim. i. 12. There be few grounds of the Chriſtian religion, whereof many people are ſo perſuaded, as

that

that they are able to maintain them formally againſt all arguments brought to the contrary, and yet they may and will hold the concluſion ſtedfaſtly and juſtly: ſo it is in this caſe in hand.

5. It is no leſs a miſtake to imagine, that the vain groundleſs confidence, which many profane ignorant Atheiſts do maintain, is this knowledge of an intereſt in Chriſt, which we plead for; many do falſly avow him to be their Father, John viii. 41. and many look for heaven, who will be beguiled with thoſe fooliſh virgins; Matt. xxv. 12. yet we muſt not think becauſe of this, that all knowledge of an intereſt is a deluſion and fancy, altho' theſe fools be deceived; for whilſt thouſands are deluded, ſome can ſay on good and ſolid grounds, 'We 'know that we are of God, and that the whole world lieth in wickedneſs,' 1 John v. 19.

CHAP. IV.

The ways by which the Lord draweth ſome to Chriſt without a ſenſible preparatory Law-work.

HAving premiſed theſe things, it now followeth that we give ſome marks by which a man may know if he be ſavingly in covenant with God, and hath a ſpecial intereſt in Chriſt, ſo as he may warrantably lay claim to God's favour and ſalvation. We ſhall only pitch upon two great and principal marks, not willing to trouble people with many.

But before we fall upon theſe, we will ſpeak of a preparatory work of the law, whereof the Lord doth ordinarily make uſe to prepare his own way in men's ſouls. This may have its own weight, as a mark, with ſome perſons. It is called, The work of the law, or, the work of humiliation. It hath ſome proportion to that ſpirit of bondage, Rom. viii. 15. And doth now under the new Teſtament anſwer unto it, and uſually leadeth on to the ſpirit of adoption.

Only here let it be remembered, 1. That we are not to ſpeak of this preparatory work of the law, as a negative mark of a true intereſt in Chriſt, as if none might lay claim to God's favour, who hath not had this preparatory work in the ſeveral ſteps of it, as we are to ſpeak of it; for, as we ſhall hear, The Lord doth not always keep that path with men. 2. The great reaſon why we ſpeak of it, is, becauſe the Lord dealeth with many, whom he doth effectually call, by ſome ſuch preparatory work: and to thoſe, who have been ſo dealt with, it may prove ſtrengthening, and will confirm them in laying the more weight on the marks which follow. 3. It may help to encourage others, who are under ſuch bondage of ſpirit, as a good prognoſtic of a gracious work to follow: for as we ſhall circumſtantiate it, it will be rarely found to miſcarry and fail of a gracious iſſue. 4. Where God uſeth ſuch a preparatory work, he doth not keep one way or meaſure in it, as we ſhall hear.

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For the more diſtinct handling of this preparatory work, we ſhall ſhortly hint the moſt ordinary ways, by which the Lord leadeth people in unto the Covenant ſavingly, and draweth them unto Chriſt.

Firſt, There are ſome called from the womb, as John the Baptiſt was, Luke i. 41, 44. or in their very young years, before they can be deeply engaged actively in Satan's ways, as Timothy, 2 Tim. iii. 15. It cannot be ſuppoſed that thoſe have ſuch a preparatory Work as we are to ſpeak of: and becauſe ſome Perſons may pretend to this Way of effectual Calling, we offer theſe Marks of it, whereby thoſe who have been ſo called may be confirmed.

I. Such uſe from their Childhood to be kept free of ordinary Pollutions, wherewith Children uſually are defiled; as ſwearing, lying mocking of religion and religious perſons, *&c.* Thoſe whom God calleth effectually, he ſanctifieth them from the Time of that effectual Calling; 'Sin 'cannot have Dominion over them, as over o-'thers, becauſe they are under Grace,' Rom. vi. 14

II. Religion is, as it were, natural to them; I mean, they need not be much preſſed to religious duties, even when they are but children; they run willingly that way, becauſe there is an inward Principle of 'Love conſtraining them,' 2 Cor. v. 14. ſo as they 'yield themſelves ſer-'vants of righteouſneſs,' without outward conſtraint, Rom. vi. 16.

III. Although ſuch know not when they were

first acquainted with God, yet they have afterwards such exercises of spirit befalling, as the saints in scripture, of whose first conversion we hear not, do speak of, They are shut out from God, upon some occasion now and then, and are admitted to come nearer again, to their Apprehension: Their heart is also further broken up by the ordinances, as is said of *Lydia*, Acts xvi. 14. and ordinarily they do remember, when some special bit of religion and duty, or when some sin, of which they were not taking notice before, was discovered to them. They who can apply these things to themselves, have much to say for their effectual calling from their youth.

Secondly. Some are brought in to Christ in a soveteign gospel way, when the Lord by some few words of love swallowing up any law-work, quickly taketh a person prisoner at the first, as he did Zaccheus, Luke xix. and others, who upon a word spoken by Christ, did leave all and follow him, and we hear no noise of a law-work dealing with them before they close with Christ Jesus.

And because some may pretend to this way of calling, we shall touch some Things most remarkable in that transaction with Zaccheus, for their clearing and confirmation. 1. He had some desire to see Christ, and such a desire, as made him wave that which some would have judged Prudence and discretion, whilst he climbeth up upon a tree that he might see him. 2. Christ spake to his heart, and that word took such hold upon him, that presently with joy he did accept

accept of Christ's offer, and closed with Christ as Lord, whilst few of any note were following him. 3. Upon this his heart doth open to the poor, although, it seems, he was a covetous man before. 4. He hath a due impression of his former ways, evidencing his respect to Moses his law, and this he doth signify before the company then present, not caring to shame himself in such things as probably were notour to the world. 5. Upon all these things, Christ confirmeth and ratifieth the bargin by his word; recommending to him that oneness of interest which behoved to be between him and the Saints, and the thoughts of his own lost condition, if Christ had not come and fought him, and found him: all which are clear, Luke xix. 3---10.

We grant the Lord calleth some so, and if any can lay claim to the special things we have now hinted, they have a good confirmation of God's dealing with them, from that Scripture; neither are they to vex themselves because of the want of a distinct preparatory law-work, if their heart hath yielded unto Christ; for a Law-work is not desirable, except for this end, therefore Christ doth offer himself directly in the scripture, and people are invited to come to him: and although many will not come to him who is the cautioner, until the spirit of bondage distress them for their debt; yet if any upon the knowledge of their lost estate, would flee and yield to Christ, none might warrantably press a law-work upon them.

As for others, whom Chriſt perſuaded by a word to follow him, whatſoever he did, or however he ſpake to them at his firſt meeting with them, we muſt rationally ſuppoſe, that then he diſcovered ſo much of their own neceſſity, and his own fulneſs and excellency to them, as made them quit all and run after him: and if he do ſo to any, we crave no more, ſince there is room enough there for the phyſician.

So that from all this, as ſome may be confirmed and ſtrengthned, with whom God hath ſo dealt; ſo there is no ground nor occaſion for deluded ſouls to flatter themſelves in their condition, who remain ignorant and ſenſeleſs of their own miſeries and Chriſt's all ſufficiency, and hold faſt deceit.

Thirdly, There are ſomebrought in to Chriſt in a way yet more declarative of his free grace; and this is, when he effectually calleth men at the hour of death. We find ſomewhat recorded of this way in that pregnant example of the thief on the croſs, Luke xxiii. 39,---43. altho' this ſeems not very pertinent for the purpoſe in hand; yet we ſhall ſpeak a little of it, that on the one hand, men may be ſparing to judge and paſs ſentence upon either themſelves or others, before the laſt gaſp. And we ſhall ſo circumſtantiate it, that on the other hand none may dare to delay ſo great a buſineſs to the laſt hour of their life.

We find theſe things remarkable in that buſineſs between Chriſt and the thief. 1. The man falleth at odds with his former companion. 2.

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He dareth not to ſpeak a wrong word of God, whoſe hand is on him, but juſtifieth him in all that is befallen him. 3. He now ſeeth Jeſus Chriſt perſecuted by the world, without a cauſe, and moſt injuriouſly. 4. He diſcovereth Chriſt to be a Lord and a king, whilſt enemies ſeem to have him at under. 5. He believeth a being of glory after death ſo really that he preferreth a portion of it to the preſent ſafety of his bodily life, which he knew Chriſt was able to grant to him at that time, and he might have choſen that with the other thief. 6. Although he was much abaſed in himſelf, and ſo humbled, that he pleaded but that Chriſt would remember him, yet he was nobly daring to throw himſelf upon the covenant, on life and death: and he had ſo much faith of Chriſt's All-ſufficiency, that he judged a ſimple remembrance from Chriſt, would ſatisfyingly do his buſineſs. 7. He acquieſced ſweetly in the word which Chriſt ſpake to him, for the ground of his comfort. All which are very clear in the caſe of that poor dying man, and do prove a very real work of God upon his heart.

As the example may encourage ſome to wait for good from God, who cannot as yet lay clear claim to any gracious work of his ſpirit; ſo we obteſt all, as they love their ſouls, not to delay their ſoul buſineſs, hoping for ſuch a caſt of Chriſt's hand in the end, as too many do; this being a rare miracle of mercy, with the glory whereof Chriſt did honourably triumph over the ignominy of his croſs: a parallel of which we

ſhall

ſhall hardly find in all the ſcripture beſide. Yea, as there are but few at all ſaved. Matt. xx. 16. 'Many be called, but few choſen;' and moſt few ſaved this way; ſo the Lord hath peremptorily threatned to laugh at the calamity, and not to hear the cry of ſuch as mocked formerly at his reproof. and would not hear when he called to them, Prov. i. 24, 25, 26. 'Becauſe I 'have called, and ye refuſed; I have ſtretched 'out my hand, and no man regarded: but ye 'have ſet at nought all my counſel, and would 'none of my reproof: I alſo will laugh at your 'calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh.' Which ſcripture, although it doth not ſhut mercy's door upon any, who at the hour of death do ſincerely judge themſelves, and flee to Chriſt, as this penitent thief did; yet it is certain, it implieth that very few, who ſit the offer until then, are honoured with repentance as he was; and ſo their cry, as not being ſincere and of the right ſtamp, ſhall not be heard.

CHAP. IV.

The work of the law by which the Lord prepares his way into mens ſouls; which is either more violent and ſudden, or more calm and gradual.

THE fourth and moſt ordinary way by which many are brought in to Chriſt, is by a clear and diſcernible work of the law, and humiliation. which we ordinarily call the ſpirit of bondage, as was hinted before. We do not mean that every one, whoſe conſcience is wak-

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ned with ſin and fear of wrath, doth really cloſe with Chriſt; the contrary doth appear in Cain, Saul, Judas, &c. But there is a conviction of ſin, a waking of conſcience, and work of humiliation, which, as we ſhall circumſtantiate it, doth rarely miſcarry or fail of a gracious iſſue, but ordinarily doth reſolve into the ſpirit of adoption, and a gracious work of God's ſpirit. And becauſe the Lord dealeth with many ſinners this way, and we find that many are much puzzled about the giving judgment of this law-work, we ſhall ſpeak of it particularly.

This work is either more violent and ſuddenly expede, or it is more ſober and lent, protracted through a greater length of time, and ſo as the ſteps of it are very diſcernible. It is more violent in ſome, as in the Jaylor, Paul, and ſome other converts in the book of the Acts of the Apoſtles, on whom Chriſt did break in at an inſtant, and fell on them as with fire and ſword, and led them captive terribly; and becauſe ſome great legal ſhakings are deceitful, and turn to nothing, if not worſe, we ſhall point at ſome things remarkable in theſe converts ſpoken of before, which did prove the work of the law on them, to have had a gracious iſſue and reſult. 1. Some word of truth or diſpenſation, putteth the perſon to a dreadful ſtand, with a great ſtir in the ſoul. Some are pricked in heart, Acts 2. 37. Some fall on trembling, Acts 16. 29. And this is ſuch a ſtir, that the perſon is brought to his wits end: 'What wilt 'thou have me to do?' ſaith Paul, Acts ix. 6.

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'What moſt I do to be ſaved?' ſaith the jaylor, Acts xvi. 30. 2. The perſon is content to have ſalvation and God's friendſhip on any terms, as the queſtion doth import, 'What would I not do! What would I not forego? What would I not undergo? 3. The perſon accepteth the condition offered by Chriſt and his ſervants, as is clear in the forecited ſcriptures. 4. The perſon preſently becometh of one intereſt with the ſaints, joining himſelf with that perſecuted ſociety, putting reſpect on thoſe whom he had formerly perſecuted, joining and continuing with them in the profeſſion of Chriſt on all hazards. Thoſe with whom the Lord hath ſo dealt, have much to ſay for a gracious work of God's ſpirit in them; and it is like, many of them can date their work from ſuch a particular time and word, or diſpenſation, and can give ſome Account of what paſt between God and them in a ſenſible change following in them from that time foreward; as Paul giveth a good account of the work and way of God with him afterwards, Acts xxii.

Again, the Lord ſometimes carrieth on this work more calmly, ſoftly and gently, protracting it ſo as the ſeveral ſteps of mens exerciſe under it are very diſcernable. It would draw a great length to enlarge every ſtep of it; we ſhall touch the moſt obſervable things in it.

I. The Lord layeth ſiege to men, who, it may be, have often refuſed to yield to him, offering himſelf in the ordinances; and by ſome word preached, read, or born in on the mind,

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or by ſome providence leading in unto the word, he doth aſſault the 'houſe kept peaceably by the ſtrong man' the devil, and thus Chriſt, who is 'the ſtronger man, cometh upon him,' Luke xi. 22. And by the ſpirit of truth, doth faſten the word on the man, in which God's curſe is denounced againſt ſuch and ſuch ſins, whereof the man knoweth himſelf guilty. The Spirit convinceth the man, and bindeth it upon him, that he is the ſame perſon againſt whom the word of God doth ſpeak, becauſe he is guilty of ſuch ſins; and from ſome ſins the man is led on to ſee more, until ordinarily he comes to ſee the ſins of his youth, ſins of omiſſion, &c. yea, he is led on until he ſee himſelf guilty almoſt of the breach of the whole law; he ſeeth innumerable evils compaſſing him, as David ſpeaketh in a fit of exerciſe, Pſal. xl. 12. A man will ſometimes will ſee ugly ſights of ſin in this caſe, and is ſharp-ſighted to reckon a ſibneſs to every ſin almoſt. Thus 'the Spirit 'convinceth of ſin,' John xvi. 8.

2. The Lord ſhaketh a ſpecial ſtrong hold in the garriſon, a refuge of lies, to which the man betaketh himſelf when his ſins are thus diſcovered to him. The poor man pretendeth to faith in Chriſt, whereby he thinks his burden is taken off him, as the phariſees ſaid, John viii. 41, 'We have one Father, even God.' They pretend to a ſpecial relation to God as a common Lord. The ſpirit of God beats the man from this by the truth of the ſcripture, proving that

he hath no true faith, and ſo no intereſt in Chriſt nor any true ſaving grace; ſhewing clear differences between true grace and the counterfeit fancies which the man hath in him; and between him and the true godly, as Chriſt laboureth do to thoſe in John viii. 42, 44. 'If God 'were your Father, ye would love me. Ye 'are of the devil, for ye do the luſts of ſuch a Father.' So, Fear ſupriſeth the Hypocrite in heart, Iſa. xxxiii. 14. eſpecially, when the Lord diſcovereth to him conditions in many of theſe promiſes, wherein he truſted moſt, not eaſily attainable; he now ſeeth grace and faith another thing than once he judged them to be. We may now in ſome reſpect, apply that word here, 'The Spirit convinceth him of ſin, be-'cauſe he hath not believed on the Son:' he is particularly convinced of unbelief, John xvi. 9. He ſeeth now a huge diſtance between himſelf and the godly, who he thought before outſtripped him only in ſome unneceſſary, proud, hateful preciſeneſs; he now ſeeth himſelf deluded and in the broad way with the periſhing multitude; and ſo in this ſight of his miſery, coucheth down under his own burden, which, before this time, he thought Chriſt did bear for him: he now beginneth to ſcar at the promiſes, becauſe of that and ſuch other words, 'What 'haſt thou to do to take my covenant in thy 'mouth,' &c? Pſal. l. 16.

III. The man becometh careful about his ſalvation, and beginneth to take it to heart, as the one thing neceſſary; he is brought to this with the

the jaylor, Acts xvi. 30. 'What ſhall I do to be ſaved?' his ſalvation becometh the leading thing with him: It was leaſt in his thoughts before, but now it prevaileth, and other things are much miſregarded by him. Since his ſoul is ready to periſh, 'What ſhall it profit him 'to gain the world, if he loſe his own ſoul?' Matth. xvi. 26. Some here are much puzzled with the thoughts of an irrevocable decree to their prejudice, and with the fears of uncertain death, which may attack them before they get matters put to a point; and ſome are vexed with apprehenſions, that they are guilty of the ſin againſt the holy Ghoſt, which is unpardonable, and ſo are driven a dangerous length; Satan ſtill caſting up to them many ſad examples of people, who have dolefully put an end to their own exerciſe: but they are in the hand of one, who 'knoweth how to ſuccour 'them that are tempted,' Heb. ii. 18.

IV. When a man is thus in hazard of miſcarrying, the Lord uſeth a work of preventing mercy towards him, quietly and under hand ſupporting him; and this is by bearing in upon his mind the poſſibility of his ſalvation, leading the man to the remembrance of pregnant proofs of God's free and rich grace, pardoning groſs tranſgreſſions, ſuch as Manaſſeh, who was a bloody idolatrous man, and had correſpondence with the Devil, and yet obtained mercy, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 12, 13. and other ſcriptures bearing offers of grace and favours indifferently to all who will yield to Chriſt,

whatſoever they have been formerly; ſo as the man is brought again to this, 'What ſhall I 'do to be ſaved?' Which doth ſuppoſe that he apprehendeth a poſſibility of being ſaved, elſe he would not propound the queſtion. He applieth that or the like word to himſelf, 'It 'may be, ye ſhall be hid in the day of the 'Lord's anger,' Zeph. ii. 3. He findeth nothing excluding him from mercy now, if he have a heart for the thing. Altho' here, it may be, the man doth not perceive, that it is the Lord who upholdeth, yet afterwards he can tell, That 'when his foot was ſlipping, 'God's mercy held him up;' as Pſal. xciv. 17, 18. the Pſalmiſt ſpeaketh in another caſe. And he will afterwards ſay, When he 'was as a 'beaſt, and a fool' in many reſpects, 'God 'held him by the hand,' Pſal. lxxiii. 22, 23.

5. After this diſcovery of a poſſibility to be ſaved, there is a work of deſire quickened in the ſoul; which is clear in that ſame expreſſion: 'What ſhall I do to be ſaved?' But ſometimes this deſire is airthed amiſs, whilſt it goeth out thus, 'What ſhall I do that I may 'work the works of God?' John vi. 28. In which caſe, the man formerly perplexed with fear and care about his ſalvation, would be at ſome work of his own to extricate himſelf; and here he ſuddenly reſolveth to do all that is commanded, and to forego every evil way, (yet much miſkenning Chriſt Jeſus) and ſo beginneth to take ſome courage to himſelf again, 'eſtabliſhing his own righteouſneſs, but not

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'ſubmitting unto the righteouſneſs of God,' Rom. x. 3. Whereupon the Lord maketh a new aſſault on him, intending the diſcovery of his abſolute broken ſtate in himſelf, that ſo room may be made for the Cautioner; as Joſhua did to the people, when he found them ſo bold in their undertakings, Joſh. xxiv. 18, 19. 'You cannot ſerve the Lord,' ſaith he, 'for 'he is a holy God, a jealous God,' &c. In this new aſſault, the Lord, 1. bends up againſt the man, the ſpirituality of the law; the commandment cometh with a new charge in the ſpiritual meaning of it, Rom. vii. 9. 'The law 'came,' ſaith Paul, viz. in the ſpiritual meaning of it; Paul had never ſeen ſuch a ſight of the law before. 2. God moſt holily doth looſe the reſtraining bonds, which he had laid upon the man's corruption, and ſuffereth it not only to boyl and ſwell within, but to threaten to break out in all the outward members. Thus ſin groweth bold, and kicketh at the law, becoming exceeding ſinful, Rom. vii. 8, 9, 13. 'But 'ſin taking occaſion by the commandment, 'wrought in me all manner of concupiſcence; 'for without the law ſin was dead; for I was 'alive without the law once; but when the 'commandment came, ſin revived, and I died. 'Was then that which is good, made death 'unto me? God forbid: but ſin, that it might 'appear ſin, working death in me by that 'which is good; that ſin by the command-'ment might become exceeding ſinful.' 3. The Lord doth diſcover to the man, more now

than ever before, the uncleanneſs of his righteouſneſs, and what ſpots are in his beſt things. Theſe things kill the man, and he dieth in his own conceit, Rom. vii. 9. and deſpaireth of relief in himſelf, if it come not from another airth.

VI. After many ups and downs here, ordinarily, the man reſolveth ſome retirement; he deſireth to be alone, he cannot keep company as before; like thoſe who in a beſieged city, when they ſee they cannot hold out, and would be glad of any good condition from the beſieging enemy; they go to a council, that they may reſolve ſomewhat. So the man here retireth, that he may ſpeak with himſelf. This is like that 'communing with our own heart,' Pſal. iv. 4. Thus God 'leadeth to the wilderneſs, 'that he may ſpeak to the heart,' Hoſ. ii. 14. When the perſon is retired, the thoughts of the heart, which were ſcattered in former ſteps of the exerciſe, do more obſervably throng in here. We ſhall reduce them into this method; 1. The man thinks of his unhappy folly, in bearing arms againſt God; and here there be large thoughts of former ways, with a bluſhing countenance, and ſelf-lothing, Ezek. xxxvi. 31. 'Then ſhall ye remember your own evil ways, 'and your doings that were not good, and 'ſhall lothe yourſelves in your own ſight,' &c. Like that of Pſal. li. 3. 'His ſin is ever before 'him.' 2. Then he remembereth what fair opportunities of yielding to God he hath baſely loſt; his ſpirit is like to faint, when he remem-

membereth that, as it is ſaid in another caſe, Pſal. xlii. 4, 5, 6. 'When I remember theſe 'things, I pour out my ſoul in me. Why art 'thou caſt down, O my ſoul? Why art thou 'diſquieted in me?—O my God, my ſoul is 'caſt down within me.' 3. He now thinks of many Chriſtians, whom he mocked and deſpiſed in his heart, perſuading himſelf now that they are happy, as having choſen the better part: he thinks of the condition of thoſe who wait on Chriſt, as the queen of Sheba did of Solomon's ſervants; 'Happy are thy ſervants,' ſaith ſhe, 'who ſtand continually before thee, 'and that hear thy wiſdom,' 1 Kings x. 8. 'Bleſſed are they that dwell in thy houſe,' &c. Pſal. lxxxiv. 4. He wiſheth to be one of the meaneſt who have any relation to God, as the prodigal ſon doth ſpeak; he would be as 'one 'of his father's hired ſervants,' Luke xv. 17, 19. 4. Then he calleth to mind the good report that is gone abroad of God, according to that teſtimony, Jonah iv. 2. the prophet knew that God was 'a gracious God, and merciful, 'ſlow to anger, and of great kindneſs,' &c. The free and large promiſes and offers of grace come in here; and the glorious practices which have paſt upon ſinners of all ſorts, according to the fame of God in ſcripture. 5. He thinks with himſelf, Why hath God ſpared me ſo long? And why have I got ſuch a ſight of my ſin? And why hath he kept me from breaking priſon at my own hand, in chuſing ſome unhappy outgate? Why hath he made

this

this ſtrange change on me? It may be it is in his heart to do me good; O that it may be ſo! ——Altho' all theſe thoughts be not in the preparatory work of every one, yet they are with many, and very promiſing where they are.

7. Upon all theſe thoughts and meditations, the man, more ſeriouſly than ever before, reſolveth to pray, and to make ſome eſſay with God, upon life and death; he concludeth, 'it 'can be no worſe with him: for if he ſit ſtill, 'he periſheth,' as the lepers ſpeak, 2 Kings vii. 3, 4. He conſidereth, with the pinched prodigal ſon, 'that there is bread enough in 'his father's houſe, and to ſpare, while he 'periſheth for want: ſo he goeth to God, for he knoweth not what elſe to make of his condition, as the prodigal ſon doth, Luke xv. 17, 18. And it may be, here he reſolveth what to ſpeak; but readily things do vary when he is liſted before God, as the prodigal ſon forgot ſome of his premeditated prayers, Luke xv. 18, 19, 21. 'I will riſe and go to my father, 'and will ſay unto him, Father, I have ſinned 'againſt heaven, and before thee, and am no 'more worthy to be called thy ſon; make me 'as one of thy hired ſervants. And he aroſe, 'and came unto his father, and ſaid unto him, 'Father I have ſinned againſt heaven, and 'in thy ſight, and am no more worthy to be 'called thy ſon.'

And now when he cometh before God, more obſervably than ever before: 1. He beginneth with 'the publican afar off,' Luke xviii. 13.

with

with many through-confeſſions and ſelf condemnings, whereof he is very liberal, as, Luke xv. 21. 'I have ſinned againſt heaven, and be-'fore thee, and am no more worthy,' &c. 2. Now begin his thoughts anent the hearing of his prayer, which he was not wont to queſtion much; he now knows what thoſe expreſſions of the ſaints, anent the hearing of their prayers, do import. 3. It is obſervable in this addreſs, that there are many broken ſentences, like that of Pſalm vi. 3. 'But thou, O Lord, 'how long?' ſupplied with ſighs and 'groan-'ings which cannot be uttered,' Rom. viii. 26. and greedily looking upward, thereby ſpeaking more than can be well expreſt by words. 4. There be ordinarily ſome interruptions, and, as it were, diverſions, the man ſpeaking ſometimes to the enemy, ſometimes to his own heart, ſometimes to the multitude in the world, as David doth in other caſes, Pſal. ix. 6. 'O thou 'enemy, deſtructions are come to a perpetual 'end.' Pſal. xlii. 5. 'Why art thou caſt 'down, O my ſoul? And why art thou diſ-'quieted in me? Hope thou in God, for I 'ſhall yet praiſe him for the help of his coun-'tenance.' Pſal. iv. 2. 'O ye ſons of men, 'how long will ye turn my glory into ſhame?' 5. It is obſervable here, that ſometimes the man will halt and be ſilent to hear ſome indiſtinct whiſpering of a joyful ſound glancing on the mind, or ſome news in ſome broken words of ſcripture, which, it may be, the man ſcarcely knoweth to be ſcripture, or whether it comes

comes from God, or Satan, to delude him; yet this he hath reſolved, only to 'hear what 'God the Lord will ſpeak,' as upon another occaſion, Pſal. lxxxv. 8. 6. More diſtinct promiſes come into the man's mind, whereupon he eſſayeth to lay hold, but is beaten off with objections, as in another caſe the Pſalmiſt is, Pſal. xxii. 3, 6. 'But thou art holy. But 'I am a worm.' Now it is about the dawning of the day with the man, and faith will ſtir as ſoon as the Lord imparteth the joyful ſound, Pſal. lxxxix. 15. This is the ſubſtance of the covenant, which may be ſhortly ſummed up in theſe words, 'Chriſt Jeſus is my 'beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed; 'hear ye him.'

We can ſpeak no further upon the man's exerciſe, as a preparatory work; for, what followeth is more than preparatory. Yet that the exerciſe may appear complete and full, we ſhall add here, That after all theſe things, the Lord, it may be, after many anſwers of divers ſorts, mightily conveyeth the ſound of his covenant into the heart, and determineth the heart to cloſe with it; and God now draweth ſo to Chriſt, John vi. 44. and ſo ſhapeth out the heart for him, that the conception cannot miſcarry; for now the heart is ſo in breadth and length for him, as that leſs cannot ſatisfy, and more is not deſired, like that of Pſal. lxxiii. 25. 'Whom have I in heaven but thee? Or 'whom have I deſired on earth beſide thee?' The ſoul now reſolveth to die, if he com-

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mand ſo, yet at his door, and facing to him-wards.

We have drawn this preparatory work to ſome length, not tying any man to ſuch a work ſo circumſtantiated; only, we ſay, The Lord dealeth ſo with ſome; and where he ſo convinceth of ſin, corruption, and ſelf-emptineſs, and maketh a man take ſalvation to heart, as the one thing neceſſary; and ſetteth him on work in the uſe of the means which God hath appointed for relief; I ſay, ſuch a work rarely ſhall be found to fail of a good iſſue and gracious reſult.

CHAP. VI.

The difference betwixt that preparatory law-work which hath a gracious iſſue, and the conviction of hypocrites.

Object. HYpocrites and reprobates have great ſtirrings of conſcience, and deep convictions about ſin, ſetting them on work ſometimes, and I do ſuſpect any preparatory work of the law I ever had, to be but ſuch as they have.

Anſw. It will be hard to give ſure eſſential differences between the preparatory work in thoſe in whom afterwards Chriſt is formed, and thoſe legal ſtirrings, which are ſometimes in reprobates: if there were not ſome gracious reſult of theſe convictions and waknings of conſcience in the Lord's people, and other marks of which we ſhall ſpeak afterwards, it were hard

hard to adventure upon any difference that is clear in these legal stirrings. Yet, for answer to the objection, I shall offer some things, which rarely will be found in the stirrings of reprobates, and which are ordinarily found in that law-work which hath a gracious issue.

I. The convictions of hypocrites and reprobates are usually confined to some few very gross transgressions. Saul grants no more but the persecuting of David, 1 Sam. xxvi. 21. Judas grants only the betraying of innocent blood, Mat. xxvii. 4. But usually those convictions, by which the Lord prepareth his own way in the soul, although they may begin at one or more gross particular transgressions, yet they sist not, but the man is led on to see many breaches of the Law, and innumerable evils compassing him, as David speaketh in the sight of his sin, Psal. xl. 12. And withal, that universal conviction, if I may call it so, is not general, as usually we hear senseless men saying, that in all things they sin: but it is particular and condescending, as Paul afterwards spake of himself; he not only is the chief of sinners, but particularly, he was a blasphemer, a persecutor, 1 Tim. i. 13.

II. The convictions which hypocrites have, do seldom reach their corruption, and that body of death, which breeds an averseness from what is good, and strongly inclineth to what is evil. Ordinarily where we find hypocrites speaking of themselves in scripture, they speak loftily, and with some self-conceit, both as to their

their freedom from corruption, John ix. 34. 'The Phariſees ſay to the poor man, 'Thou 'waſt altogether born in ſin, and doſt thou 'teach us?' As if they themſelves were not as corrupt by nature as he; they ſpeak of great ſins as Hazael did, 2 Kings viii. 13. 'Am 'I a dog, that I ſhould do this great thing;' And alſo in their undertakings of duty, as that ſcribe ſpake, Matt. viii. 19. 'Maſter I will 'follow thee whitherſoever thou goeſt.' See how the people do ſpeak, Jer. xlii. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. They undertake to do all that God will command them: ſo that they ſtill 'go about (in 'any caſe,) to eſtabliſh their own righteouſneſs, 'not ſubmitting unto the righteouſneſs of God,' Rom. x. 3. But I may ſay, that convictions and exerciſe about corruption, and that body of death, inclining to evil, and diſenabling for good, is not the leaſt part of the work where the Lord is preparing his own way. They uſe to judge themſelves very wretched becauſe of a body of ſin, and are at their wits end how to be delivered, as Paul ſpeaketh when he is under the exerciſe of it afterwards, Rom. vii. 24. 'O wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver 'me from the body of this death?'

III. It will ordinarily be found, that the convictions which are in hypocrites, either, are not ſo ſerious, as that ſome other buſineſs will not put them out of head before any ſatisfaction be gotten, as in Cain, who went and built a city, and we hear no more of his convictions, Gen. iv. Felix went away until a more conve-

nient time, and we hear no more of his trembling, Acts 24. 25. Or, if that work become very ſerious, then it runneth to the other extremity and deſpair of relief, leaving no room for any out-gate. So we find Judas very ſerious in his convictions, yet he grew deſperate and hanged himſelf, Matt. xxvii. 4, 5. But where the Lord prepareth his own way, the work is both ſo ſerious, as the perſon cannot be put off until he find ſome ſatisfaction; and yet under that very ſeriouſneſs he lieth open for relief; both which are clear in the jaylor's words, 'What muſt I do to be ſaved?' Acts xvi. 30. This ſerious enquiry after relief, is a very obſervable thing in the preparatory work which leadeth on to Chriſt. Yet we deſire none to lay too much weight on theſe things, ſince God hath allowed clear differences between the precious and the vile.

Object. I ſtill fear I have not had ſo thoro' a ſight of my ſin and miſery, as the Lord giveth to many whom he effectually calleth, eſpecially to great tranſgreſſors, ſuch as I am.

Anſw. It is true the Lord diſcovereth to ſome great ſights of their ſin and miſery, and they are thereby put under legal terrors: but as all are not brought in by that ſenſible preparatory law work, as we ſhewed before; ſo even thoſe who are dealt with after that way, are very differently and variouſly exerciſed, in regard of the degrees of terror, and of the continuance of that work. The jaylor hath a violent work of a very ſhort continuance; Paul hath a work continuing

nuing three days; ſome perſons are 'in bond-'age through fear of death all their days,' Heb. ii. 15. So that we muſt not limit the Lord to one way of working here. The main thing we are to look unto in theſe legal wakenings and convictions of ſin and miſery, is, if the Lord reach thoſe ends in us, for which uſually theſe ſtirrings and convictions are ſent into the ſoul; and if thoſe ends be reached, it is well, we are not to vex ourſelves about any preparatory work further. Now, thoſe ends which God driveth ordinarily with ſinners, by theſe legal terrors and wakenings of conſcience, are four.

Firſt, The Lord diſcovers ſights of men's ſin and miſery to them, to chaſe them out of themſelves, and to put them out of conceit of their own righteouſneſs. Men naturally have great thoughts of themſelves, and do incline much to the covenant of works: the Lord therefore doth diſcover to them ſo much of their ſin, and corruption, even in their beſt things that they are made to lothe themſelves, and to deſpair of relief in themſelves; and ſo they are forced to flee out of themſelves, and from the covenant of works to ſeek refuge elſe where, Heb. vi. 18. They become dead to themſelves and the law, as to the point of juſtification, Rom. vii. 4. Then have they no more confidence in the fleſh, Phil. iii. 3. This is ſuppoſed in the offers of Chriſt, 'coming to ſeek and 'ſave that which is loſt,' Luke xix. 10. and 'to be a phyſician to thoſe who are ſick,' Matt. ix. 12.

The Second great end is, to commend Chriſt Jeſus to men's hearts above all things, that ſo they may fall in love with him, and betake themſelves to that treaſure and jewel, which only enricheth, Matt. xiii. 44, 46. and by ſo doing may ſerve the Lord's deſign in the contrivement of the goſpel, which was the manifeſtation of his free grace through Chriſt Jeſus in the ſalvation of men. The ſight of a man's own miſery and damnable eſtate by nature, is a ready way to make him prize Chriſt highly, who alone can ſet ſuch a wretch at liberty: yea, it not only leadeth a man to an high eſteem of Chriſt, but alſo of all things that relate to that way of ſalvation, as grace, the new covenant, faith, &c. and maketh him carefully to gather and treaſure up his Michtams, or golden ſcriptures, for the confirmation of his intereſt in theſe things.

The third great end is, To deter and ſcar people and to make them caſt out with it, and and conſent to put their neck under all his yoke. God kindleth ſome ſparks of hell in men's boſom's by the diſcovery of their ſin, as a ready mean to make them henceforth ſtand in awe, knowing how 'bitter a thing it is to depart 'from the Lord.' Jer. ii. 19. So we find reſt offered to the weary, upon condition they will take on Chriſt's yoke, Matt. xi. 29. 'Take 'my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am 'meek and lowly in heart; and ye ſhall find 'reſt unto your ſouls.' And God offereth to own men, as their God and father, upon condition they

they will allow no peaceable abode to Belial, 2 Cor. vi. 14, 15, 17, 18. 'What fellowſhip hath righteouſneſs with unrighteouſneſs? And what communion hath light with darkneſs? And what concord hath Chriſt with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an Infidel? Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye ſeparate, ſaith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing: and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye ſhall be my ſons and daughters, ſaith the Lord Almighty.'

The fourth great end is to work up men to a patient and thankful ſubmiſſion to all the Maſter's pleaſure. This is a ſingular piece of work, Ezek. xvi. 63. Then ſhalt thou 'remember and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more, becauſe of thy ſhame, when I am pacified towards thee, for all that thou haſt done ſaith the Lord.' The ſight of a man's own vileneſs and deſervings, maketh him ſilent, and to lay his hand on his mouth, whatſoever God doth unto him, Pſal. xxxix. 9. 'I was dumb and opened not my mouth, becauſe thou didſt it.' Ezra ix. 13. 'God hath puniſhed us leſs than our iniquities.' Micah vii. 9. 'I will bear the indignation of the Lord, becauſe I have ſinned.' The man careth not what God doth to him, or how he deal with him, if he ſave him from the deſerved wrath to come. Alſo any mercy is a large mercy to him, who hath ſeen ſuch a ſight of himſelf; he is leſs than the leaſt of mercies, Gen. xxxii. 10. 'Any crumb

'falling from the master's table' is welcome, Matt. 27. He thinks it rich mercy thathe is not consumed, Lam. iii. 22. This is the thing that marvellously maketh God's poor crossed people so silent under, and satisfied with their lot; nay, they think he deserveth hell who openeth his mouth at any thing God doth to him, since he hath pardoned his transgressions.

So then for satisfying the objection, I say, if the Lord hath driven thee out of thyself, and commended Christ to thy heart above all things, and made thee to resolve on his strength, to wage war with every known transgression; and thou art in some measure as a weaned child, acquiescing in what he doth unto thee, desiring to lay thy hand on thy mouth thankfully; then thy convictions of sin and misery, and whatsoever thou dost plead as a preparatory work is sufficient, and thou art to debate no more anent it: only be advised to study new discoveries of the sense of thy lost condition every day, because of thy old and new sins; and also to see fresh help in Christ, who is a priest for ever to make intercession; and to have the work of sanctification and patience with thankfulness renewed and quickened often: For somewhat of thatwork which abaseth thee, exalteth Christ, and conformeth to his will, must convey thee throughout all thy life time in this world.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

Of Faith.

WE come now to ſpeak of ſome more clear and ſure marks, by which men may take up their gracious ſtate and intereſt in Chriſt. The firſt thing whereby men may know it, is, their cloſing with Chriſt in the goſpel, wherein he is held forth. This is believing, or faith, which is the condition of the covenant, Rom. iv. 16. It is of faith, &c.' Acts xvi. 31. 'Be-'lieve on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and thou ſhalt 'be ſaved.' Now although in propriety of ſpeech, it is hard to prove an intereſt by faith, it being our very intereſt in him; yet the heart's cloſing with Chriſt Jeſus is ſo diſcernible in it ſelf, that we may well place it among the marks of a gracious ſtate: and if a man can make out this, that he believeth on and in Chriſt Jeſus, he thereby doth prove a very true intereſt in him.

Many do ſcar at this, as a mark, upon one of theſe three grounds ordinarily.

1. Some conceive faith to be a difficult myſterious thing, hardly attainable. To theſe I ſay, do not miſtake, faith is not ſo difficult as many apprehend it to be: I grant true faith in the meaneſt degree is the gift of God, and above the power of fleſh and blood; for God muſt' draw men unto Chriſt,' John vi. 44. 'No 'man can come to me except the Father which 'hath ſent me, draw him,' Phil. i. 29. 'Unto 'you it is given, in the behalf of Chriſt, to be-'lieve

'lieve on him.' Yet it were a reflection upon Chriſt, and all he hath done, to ſay it were a matter of inſuperable difficulty; as is clear, Rom.x.6,11. 'The righteouſneſs which is of faith 'ſpeaketh on this wiſe, Say not in thine heart, 'who ſhall aſcend into heaven? that is to 'bring down from above: or, who ſhall deſcend 'into the deep? That is to bring up Chriſt a-'gain from the dead. But what ſaith it? the 'word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in 'thy heart: that is, the word of faith which 'we preach, that if thou ſhalt confeſs with thy 'mouth the Lord Jeſus, and ſhalt believe in 'thine heart, that God hath raiſed him from the 'dead, thou ſhalt be ſaved: for with the heart 'man believeth unto righteouſneſs, and with the 'mouth confeſſion is made unto ſalvation; for 'the ſcripture ſaith, whoſoever believeth on him 'ſhall not be aſhamed.' It were according to that ſcripture, as much upon the matter as to ſay, Chriſt came not from heaven, is not riſen from the dead, or aſcended victorious to heaven. I ſay, he hath made the way to heaven moſt eaſy; and faith, which is the condition required on our part, more eaſy than men do imagine. For the better underſtanding of this, conſider that juſtifying faith is not to believe that I am elected, or to believe that God loveth me, or that Chriſt died for me, or the like; theſe things are indeed very difficult, and almoſt impoſſible at the firſt hand to be won at by thoſe who are ſerious; whilſt natural atheiſts, and deluded hypocrites, find no difficulty in ſo-

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ſerting all thoſe things: I ſay, true juſtifying faith is not any of the foreſaid things; neither is it ſimply the believing of any ſentence that is written, or that can be thought upon. I grant, he that believeth on Chriſt Jeſus, believeth what God hath ſaid anent man's ſinful miſerable condition by nature, and he believeth that to be true, That 'there is life in the Son who was ſlain, 'and is riſen again from the dead,' &c. But none of theſe, nor the believing of many ſuch truths, do ſpeak out juſtifying faith, or that believing on the Son of God, ſpoken of in ſcripture; for then it were ſimply an act of the underſtanding: but true juſtifying faith, which we now ſeek after, as a good mark of an intereſt in Chriſt, is chiefly and principally an act or work of the heart and will, having preſuppoſed ſundry things about truth in the underſtanding, 'With the heart that is believed unto righteouſ-'neſs,' Rom. x. 10. And altho' it ſeem, verſe 9. of that chapter, that a man is ſaved upon condition that he believe this truth, 'God rai-'ſed Chriſt from the dead;' yet we muſt underſtand another thing there, and verſe 10. than the believing the truth of that propoſition: for, beſide that all devils have that faith whereby they believe, that God raiſed Chriſt from the dead; ſo the ſcripture hath clearly reſolved juſtifying faith into a receiving of Chriſt, John i. 12. 'As many as received him, to them gave 'he power to become the ſons of God, even to 'them that believe on his name.' The receiving of Chriſt is there explained to be the believing

lieving on his name. It is ſtill called a 'ſtaying 'on the Lord,' Iſ. xxvi. 3. A truſting in God, often mentioned in the Pſalms, and the word is a leaning on him. It is a believing on Chriſt, John vi. 29. 'This is the work of God, that 'ye believe on him whom he hath ſent,' and often ſo expreſt in the New Teſtament. When God maketh men believe ſavingly, he is ſaid to draw them unto Chriſt; and when the Lord inviteth them to believe, he calleth them to come to him, John vi. 37. 44. 'All that the Fa-'ther giveth me, ſhall come to me; and him 'that cometh to me, I will in no wiſe caſt out. 'No man can come to me, except the Father 'who hath ſent me, draw him.' The kingdom of heaven is like a man finding a jewel, wherewith he falleth in love, Matt. xiii. 44, 45, 46. Now, I ſay, this acting of the heart on Chriſt Jeſus, is not ſo difficult a thing as is conceived. Shall that be judged a myſterious difficult thing, who doth conſiſt much in deſire? if men have but an appetite they have it; for they are 'bleſſed that hunger after righteouſ-'neſs,' Matt. v 6. 'If you will, you are wel-'come,' Rev. xxii. 17. Is it a matter of ſuch intricacy and inſuperable difficulty, greedily to look to that exalted Saviour? Iſa. xlv. 22. 'Look 'unto me and be ſaved, all the ends of the earth;' and to receive a thing that is offered, held forth, and declared to be mine, if I will but accept and take it, and in a manner open my mouth, and give way to it? Pſal. lxxxi. 10. 'Open thy 'mouth wide, and I will fill it.' Such a thing

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is faith, if not leſs. Oh, if I could perſuade people what is juſtifying faith, which impropriateth Chriſt to me! We often ſcar people from their juſt reſt and quiet, by making them apprehend faith to be ſome deep myſterious thing, and by moving unneceſſary doubts about it; whereby it is needleſly darkened.

II. Some make no uſe of this mark, as judging it a high preſumptuous crime to pretend to ſo excellent a thing as is the very condition of the new covenant. To theſe I ſay, you need not ſtartle ſo much at it, as if it were high pride to pretend to it; for whatſoever true faith be, men muſt reſolve to have it, or nothing at all; all other marks are in vain without it; a thouſand things a beſides will not do the buſineſs: 'Unleſs a man believe, he abideth in the ſtate 'of condemnation,' John iii. 18, 36. 'He that 'believeth not, is condemned already, becauſe 'he hath not believed in the name of the only 'begotten Son of God. He that believeth not 'the Son, ſhall not ſee life, but the wrath of 'God abideth on him.'

III. Others do not meddle with this noble mark of faith, becauſe they judge it a work of the greateſt difficulty, to find out faith where it is. To theſe I ſay, it is not ſo difficult to find it out, ſince 'he that believeth, hath the wit-'neſs in himſelf, 1 John v. 10. It is a thing which by ſome ſerious ſearch may be known. Not only may we do much to find it out by the preparatory work going before it in many, as the apprehending and believing of a man's loſt eſtate,

ſtate, and that he cannot do his own buſineſs, and that there is ſatisfying fulneſs in Chriſt, and very deſirable if he could overtake it; a ſerious minding of this, with a heart laid open for relief; as alſo by the ordinary companions and concomitants of it, viz. The liking of Chriſt's dominion, his kingly and prophetical office; I deſire to reſign myſelf wholly up to him, to be at his diſpoſing: as alſo by the native conſequences of it, viz. The aſſoiling of the word; the aſſoiling of my own conſcience according to the word, a heart-purifying work, a working by love, &c. I ſay, not only may we know faith by theſe things, but it is diſcernible by it ſelf and of its own nature; although I deny not, but there moſt be ſome help of God's Spirit, 'by 'which we know what is freely given unto us 'of God,' 1 Cor. ii. 12. As alſo, that God hath allowed many evidences and marks, as precious helps, whereby men may clear up faith more fully to themſelves, 1 John v. 13. 'Theſe 'things have I written unto you that believe on 'the name of the Son of God, that ye may know 'that ye have eternal life.' Yet I ſtill ſay, that faith, or believing, which is ſome acting of the heart upon Chriſt in the goſpel, and the tranſacting with him there, is diſcernible of itſelf, and by itſelf, to a judicious underſtanding perſon, with an ordinary influence of the Spirit; unleſs the Lord, for reaſons known to himſelf, do overcloud a man's reflex light, by which he ſhould take up and perceive what is in him.

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This justifying faith, which we assert to be so discernable, is, in the Lord's deep wisdom and gracious condescendency, variously expressed in scripture, according to the different actings of it upon God, and outgoings after him, so as every one who hath it, may find and take it up in his own mould. It sometimes acteth by a desire of union with him in Christ: this is that looking to him in Is. xlv. 22. 'Look unto me, and be 'ye saved, all the ends of the earth.' This seems to be a weak act of faith, and far below other actings of it at other times, perhaps in that same person. Men will look to what they dare not approach, to their apprehension, which they dare not touch or embrace; they may look to one to whom they dare not speak: yet God hath made the promise to faith in that acting, as the foreceited scripture doth shew, and this he hath done mercifully and wisely; for this is the only discernable way of the acting of faith of some persons sometimes. Such are the actings or outgoings of faith expressed in scripture, by 'hungring and thirsting after righteousness,' Matt. v. 6, and that expressed by willing, Rev. xxii. 17. 'And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.'

Again, this faith goeth out sometimes in the act of recumbency, or leaning on the Lord, the soul taking up Christ then as a resting-stone, and God hath so held him out, although he be a stumbling-stone to others, Rom. ix. 33. This acting of it is hinted in the expressions of trusting and staying on God, so often mentioned in scripture; and precious promises are made to

this acting of faith, as Iſa. xxvi 3, 4. 'God will 'keep them in perfect peace, whoſe minds are 'ſtayed on him: becauſe ſuch do truſt in him. 'Truſt in the Lord; for with him is everlaſting 'ſtrength.' So, Pſal. cxxv. 1. 'They that 'truſt in the Lord, ſhall be as mount Zion, 'which abideth for ever.' I ſay, the Lord hath made promiſes to this way of faith's acting, as knowing it will often go out after him in this way with many perſons; and this way of its acting will be moſt diſcernible to them.

It goeth out after God ſometimes by an act of waiting, when the ſoul hath ſomewhat depending before God, and hath not got out his mind ſatisfyingly anent that thing; then faith doth wait, and ſo it hath the promiſe, Iſa. xlix. 23. 'They ſhall not be aſhamed that 'wait for me.' Sometimes it acteth in a wilful way upon the Lord, when the ſoul apprehendeth God thruſting it away, and threatening its ruin, ſo, Job xiii. 15. 'Tho' he ſlay 'me, yet will I truſt in him.' The faith of that poor woman of Canaan, Matt. xv. 22,—28. ſo highly commended by Chriſt, did go out in this way of wilful acting over difficulties; and the Lord ſpeaketh much good of it, and to it, becauſe ſome will be put to it, to exerciſe faith that way ſometimes, and ſo they have that for their encouragement. It were tedious to inſtance all the ſeveral ways of the acting of faith upon, and its exerciſe about and outgoing after Chriſt. I may ſay, according to the various conditions and preſſures of

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the soul of man, the Lord hath variously held out himself and his fulness in Christ under divers notions, as might most fitly meet the distress or condition of man. And accordingly, faith, which God hath appointed to traffic and travel between Christ and man, as the instrument of conveyance of his fulness unto man, and of maintaining union and communion with him, acteth variously and differently upon God in Christ: for faith is the very shaping out of a man's heart according to God's device of salvation by Christ Jesus, in whom it pleased the Father that fulness should dwell: so that let Christ turn what way he will, faith airteth and pointeth that way. Now he turneth all ways in which he can be useful to poor man, and therefore faith acteth accordingly on him for drawing out of that fulness, according to a man's case and condition. As for example, The soul is naked, destitute of a covering to keep it from the storm of God's wrath: Christ is fine raiment, Rev. iii. 17, 18. Then accordingly, faith's work here is to put on the Lord Jesus, Gal. iii. 27. The soul is hungry and thirsty after somewhat that may everlastingly satisfy: Christ Jesus is, 'Milk, wine, 'water, the bread of life, and the true manna,' Isa. lv. 1, 2. John vi. 48.---51. He is the 'feast of fat things, and of wine refined,' Isa. xxv. 6. Then the work and exercise of faith is to 'go, buy, eat and drink abundant-'ly,' Isa. lv. 1. John vi. 53.---57. The soul is pursued for guilt more or less, and is not

law-biding; Chriſt Jeſus is the city of refuge, and the high Prieſt there, during whoſe life-time, that is, for ever, the poor man who wins thither, is ſafe; then the work and exerciſe of faith is, to 'flee thither for refuge, to lay hold 'on the hope ſet before us,' Heb. vi. 18. In a word, whatſoever way he may benefit poor man, ſo he ſpeaketh of himſelf: and as he holdeth out himſelf in the Scripture; ſo faith doth point towards him. If he be a bride-groom, faith will go out in a marriage relation; if he be a father, faith pleadeth the man to be a child; if he be a ſhepherd, faith pleads the man may be one of his ſheep; if he be a Lord, faith calleth him ſo, 'which none can 'do, but by the Spirit of Jeſus,' 1 Cor. xii. 3. If he be dead and riſen again for our juſtification, faith believeth God hath raiſed him on that account, Rom. x. 9. Whereſoever he be, there would faith be; and whatſoever he is, faith would be ſomewhat proportionally: for, by faith the heart is ſhapen out in breadth and length for him; yea, when the fame and report of him goeth abroad in his truth, altho' faith ſeeth not much, yet it believeth on his Name, upon the very fame he hath ſent abroad of himſelf, John i. 12.

But here, for avoiding of miſtakes, conſider, 1. That altho' juſtifying faith acteth ſo variouſly, yet every believer, who hath a good title to Chriſt Jeſus, hath not all theſe various actings and exerciſes of faith; for his condition craveth them not: and alſo the Maſter is pleaſed

pleaſed not to lead out the faith of ſome perſons at ſometimes in ſome of theſe ways, for reaſons known to himſelf, even when their neceſſity (to their apprehenſion) calleth for ſuch actings of faith. Surely, every one dare not ſay, 'Though he kill me, yet will I truſt in 'him.' Many would not have gone up with the woman of Canaan, I ſpake of, Matth. xv. but would have been diſcouraged, and have quit the purſuit. It is on this account that Chriſt doth highly commend the faith of ſome beyond the faith of others, Matth. viii. 10. of the Centurion; Matth. xv. 28. of the woman of Canaan. Many good people are much diſquieted anent their faith, becauſe it goeth not out in all thoſe ways we find recorded in the ſcripture; but there is hardly any man will be found, whoſe faith hath acted all theſe ways.

II. Many of theſe actings of faith are much intended and remitted. They are ſometimes ſtrong and vigorous, and diſcernible; and ſometimes they fail, and miſbelief doth prevail; ſo as it were an uncertain thing to judge of a man's ſtate by theſe. We find the ſaints very different from themſelves in regard of the acting of faith ſometimes, as we ſhewed before.

III. Each one of theſe actings of faith ſpeaketh good to the perſon in whom it is, and hath promiſes annexed unto it, as we have ſaid. Yet,

IV. Although theſe actings of faith have promiſes annexed unto them, they are not, for that, the condition of the new covenant;

for then every one behoved to have each one of them, which is not true, as we said before. A promise is made to him who overcometh; but perseverance is not the condition of the new covenant, but doth suppose it. There are promises made to the exercise of all graces, in scripture; but only faith is the condition of the covenant. I say then, these promises are made to these actings of faith, not as such; but as they do suppose justifying faith, which is the condition of the covenant. All these are actings of faith, but not as it is justifying. Therefore,

V. There is somewhat common to all gracious persons, which may be supposed by all the foresaid actings of faith, wherein the nature and essence of justifying faith standeth. And this is the heart's satisfaction anent God's device of salvation by Christ; when man pleaseth God's invention of satisfaction to justice, through Christ Jesus, in whom all fulness doth dwell now by the Father's pleasure; when the soul and heart of man acquiesceth in that, then it believeth unto salvation. As at first the Lord made man suitable to the covenant of works by creating him perfect, and so putting him in a capacity to perform his will in that covenant, so under the new covenant, when God giveth the new heart to man, he setteth the idea and stamp of all his device in the new covenant upon the man, so as there is a consonancy to God's will there: thus he beareth the image of the second Adam, Christ Jesus, on him. This is a great

great part of the new heart, and is moſt oppoſed to works; ſince now the man abſolutely falleth off works, becoming dead to the law, as to the point of juſtification, by the body of Chriſt, Rom. vii. 4. Man perceiving that God, hath deviſed a way of ſatisfying divine juſtice, and recovering loſt man by the incarnation of Chriſt, he thinks this ſo good and ſure a way, that he abſolutely giveth up with the law, as I ſaid before, and cloſeth with this device: and this is believing, or faith, very oppoſite to works, and all reſting thereupon. This cannot fail to be in all gracious perſons, in whom many of the actings of faith are not to be found. This doth clearly ſuppoſe known diſtreſs in a man, without all relief in himſelf: this ſuppoſeth known fulneſs in Chriſt, as the alone ſufficient relief: this imports a ſort of impropriation: for the heart, pleaſing that device, in ſo far ſwayeth towards it. This is a thing clearly ſuppoſed in all the actings of faith, ſpoken of before. He that greedily hungereth, hath this; and he that puts on Chriſt, hath this, &c. This is to eſteem Chriſt the wiſdom and power of God to ſalvation; ſo is he ſaid to be to all that believe, 1 Cor. i. 24. They eſteem that device wiſe and ſure, beſeeming God; and that is to believe. On this account, Chriſt who is the rejected ſtone to many, is precious to them who believe; a fit ſtone to recover, fortify and beautify the tottering building and fabric of loſt man. 'To 'whom coming as unto a living ſtone, diſal-

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'lowed indeed of men, but choſen of God 'and precious; ye alſo as lively ſtones are 'built up a ſpiritual houſe, an holy prieſt-'hood, to offer up ſpiritual ſacrifices, accepta-'ble to God by Jeſus Chriſt. Wherefore it 'is contained in the ſcriptures, Behold I lay 'in Sion, a chief corner-ſtone, elect, precious, 'and he that believeth on him ſhall not be 'confounded. Unto you therefore which be-'lieve he is precious; but unto them which 'be diſobedient, the ſtone which the builders 'diſallowed, the ſame is made the head of the 'corner: and a ſtone of ſtumbling, and a rock 'of offence, even to them which ſtumble at 'the word, being diſobedient, whereunto alſo 'they were appointed,' 1 Pet. ii 4.—8. 'The 'kingdom of God is like a man finding a trea-'ſure, for which with joy he ſelleth all,' Matt. xiii. 44. Theſe words hold out the very way of believing, viz. Salvation is diſcovered in the goſpel to be by Chriſt; the heart valueth that invention as ſatisfying. This is to believe on the Son of God lifted up; which is compared with the looking to the braſen ſerpent, John iii. 14. It was man's approbation of that device which made it effectual for his healing; ſo is it here, 'he that ſo believeth ſetteth to his 'ſeal that God is true,' John iii. 33. True, Wherein? In that record he hath born, that God hath provided life for men, and placed it all in Chriſt. 1 John v. 10, 11. 'He that be-'lieveth not, maketh God a liar.' Wherein? In his ſaying that Chriſt is a ſafe and ſure way

to heaven. This is the pleaſing and acquieſcing in that device; and it is conſonant to all I know ſpoken of juſtifying faith in ſcripture. This is the believing on Chriſt and on his name, the receiving of him and reſting on him for ſalvation, in our catechiſm: the believing that Jeſus is the Chriſt, that is, the anointed one, whom the Father hath ſealed, and ſet apart and qualified for the work of reconciling man unto God; and 'he that believeth that Jeſus is the 'Chriſt, is born of God, 1 John v. 1. This is to 'believe with the heart that God hath raiſed 'Chriſt from the dead, Rom. x 9. The man believeth Chriſt died, and is riſen on the account of ſatisfaction for man's tranſgreſſion. Devils may believe that: Nay, but the man I ſpeak of, believeth it with his heart (which no natural man doth until a new heart be given unto him) that is he cordially pleaſeth, is ſatisfied with, and acquieſceth in this noble invention. And this faith layeth out itſelf now and then in its actings, outgoings and exerciſe, according to all the covenant-relations under which Chriſt is held forth in the ſcriptures.

Now, I ſay, This faith is diſcernible, not only in theſe actings many times: a man may know if his heart doth hunger after Chriſt, and flee for refuge to him, when purſued; and if he doth commit himſelf unto God, &c. But alſo in its very nature; as it is juſtifying, it is diſcernible and may be known. A man may clearly know, if from known diſtreſs in himſelf upon the report and fame of Chriſt's fulneſs his heart

heart doth please God's device in the new covenant; if it goeth out after Christ in that invention, and pleaseth him as Lord of the life of men, terminating and resting there, and no where else, acquiescing in that contrivement with desire and complacency: This is a discernible thing: therefore I obtest men impartially to examine themselves, and if they find that their heart has closed so with that device of salvation, and has gone out after him as precious, that thereupon they conclude a sure and true interest in Christ Jesus, and a good claim and title to the crown; since 'he that believeth 'shall never perish, but have everlasting life.' John iii. 16. 36.

CHAP. VIII.

The difference betwixt the faith of hypocrites, and true saving justifying faith

Object. HYpocrites and reprobates have a sort of faith, and are said to believe. John ii. 23, 24. 'Many believed in his 'name when they saw the miracles which he 'did; but Jesus did not commit himself unto 'them, because he knew all men.' Acts viii. 13. Then Simon, the sorceter, himself believed also, and cannot choose but to go out after Christ, and that device of salvation when they hear of it; and they profess they do so, yet are deluded, and so may I be.

Answ. To say nothing of that thought of your heart, (whereby you wonder that any man should

not

not please the device of salvation by Christ, and lead out towards him) as a very promising thing and speaking out justifying Faith to be in your bosom; and to say nothing in contradiction to that which you think, That a natural man, whilst such, and before he get a new heart, can please that device, and believe with his heart, and affectionately, that which perfectly overthroweth the covenant of works, and abaseth man in the point of self-righteousness already attained, or that can be won at by him, which is inconsistent with many scriptural truths; I offer these differences between the faith of all hypocrites or reprobates, and that true saving justifying faith whereof we have spoken.

1. They never close with Christ Jesus in that device, and him alone as a sufficient covering of the eyes, as is said of Abraham to Sarah, Gen. xx. 16. They still hold fast somewhat of their own, at least to help to procure God's favour and salvation their heart doth still speak, as that young man's speech, Luke xviii. 18, 21. doth insinuate, 'What shall I do to inherit eternal 'life?' besides that, they do still retain their former lovers, and will not break their covenants with hell and death, imagining they may have Christ with these things equally sharing in their hearts; contrary to that, 'A man cannot serve 'two masters,' Matt. 6. 24. Either Christ must be judged absolute Lord, and worthy to be so or nothing at all. And so it is clear, their heart is not shapen out for that device of salvation by Christ, whom God hath alone made

Lord here, in whom all fulneſs ſhall dwell. But where juſtifying faith is, the ſoul of a man and his heart doth cloſe with Chriſt, and him alone, 'having no confidence in the fleſh, Phil. iii. 3. Pſal. lxii. 5. He truſteth only in God. Alſo the man here giveth up with other lovers, as they compete with Chriſt, he reſolves not to be for another, Hoſea iii. 3. He calls him Lord, 'which a man can only do by the ſpirit 'of Chriſt, 1 Cor xii. 3.

II. A hypocrites and reprobates do never cloſe with Chriſt alone; ſo they do never cloſe with a full Chriſt, as he is anointed to be king, to rule over a man in all things; a prieſt to procure pardon and to make peace for man upon all occaſions; a prophet to be wiſdom, and a teacher and counſellor in all caſes to man: So they do not receive Chriſt, eſpecially in the firſt and third offices. But where true juſtifying faith is, a man cloſeth with whole Chriſt in all his offices, judging all his will good, holy, juſt and ſpiritual, Rom. vii. 12. and 'right concerning 'all things,' Pſal cxix. 128. 'maketh mention 'of his righteouſneſs only,' Pſal. lxxi. 16.

The man alſo giveth up himſelf to be taught of him, Matt. xi. 29. Learn of me. So that Chriſt is made to the true believer, with his own conſent, Wiſdom, Righteouſneſs, Sanctification, and complete redemption, 1 Cor. i. 30. And altho, he hath not all theſe things formerly in exerciſe, when his heart goeth out after Chriſt. yet upon ſearch and trial, it will be found with him, as I have ſaid.

III.

III. Hypocrites and reprobates do never cloſe with Chriſt, and all the inconveniences may follow him; they ſtick at that with the Scribe, Matt. viii. 19, 20. But where true juſtifying Faith is, a man doth cloſe with him on all hazards; he reſolveth to forego all, rather than to forego Chriſt. 'We have left all, and have 'followed thee,' Mark x. 28. 'He reckoneth 'all to be loſs and dung for the excellency of 'Chriſt Jeſus, as his Lord, and to be found in him,' Phil. iii. 8.

We might give other differences alſo; as that faith true is operative, purifying the heart, Acts xv. 9. working by love, Gal. v. 6. whilſt hypocrites do only clean the outſide of the platter, Matt. xxiii. 25. and do all to be ſeen of men, Matt. vi. 5. 'not ſeeking the honour that is 'of God only, and ſo cannot believe. John v. 44. We might alſo ſhew, that true faith is never alone in a man, but attended with other ſaving graces: but becauſe theſe things will coincide with what followeth; and here we are ſhewing that a man may take up his gracious ſtate by his faith, and the acting thereof on Chriſt; we paſs theſe things.

CHAP. IX.

Of the new Creature

THE ſecond great mark of a gracious ſtate and true ſaving intereſt in Jeſus Chriſt, is the new creature, 2 Cor. v. 17. 'If any 'man be in Chriſt he is a new creature.' This

new creation or renovation of that man is a very ſenſible change, although not in thoſe who are effectually called from the womb, or in their younger years; becauſe thoſe have had this new creature from that time in them, ſo as this change in after-periods of time is not diſcernable; yet in thoſe who have been regenerated and brought into Chriſt after they were come to greater age, and ſo havemore palpably been under the power of darkneſs, before they were tranſlated into the kingdom of Chriſt, Col. i. 13. But in all who do warrantably pretend to Chriſt, this new creature muſt be; although ſome do not know experimentally the contraries of every part of it, ſo as others do; becauſe they have not been equally in regard of practice under the power of darkneſs. This new creature is called the new man, Col. iii. 10. which doth hold out the extent of it. It is not ſimply a new tongue or new hand, but a new man. There is a principle of new life and motion put in the man, which is the new heart; which new principle of life ſendeth forth acts of life, or of 'conformity to the image of him who created it,' Col. 3. 10. ſo as the party is renewed in ſome meaſure every way. This renovation of the man who is in Chriſt, may be reduced into theſe two great heads.

Firſt, There is a renovation of the man's perſon, ſoul and body, in ſome meaſure. I. His underſtanding is renewed, ſo as he judgeth Chriſt preached in the goſpel to be 'the wiſdom

'dom and power of God,' a wiſe and ſtrong device beſeeming God, 1 Cor. i. 23, 24, He knoweth the things of God really and ſolidly, not to be yea and nay, and uncertain fancies; but all to be yea and amen, ſolid, certain, ſubſtantial things, having a deſirable accompliſhment in Chriſt, and reſolving much in him, 1 Cor. ii. 14. 15. 'The natural man receiveth 'not the things of the ſpirit of God, for they 'are fooliſhneſs unto him, neither can he know 'them becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned: 'but he that is ſpiritual judgeth all things,' 2 Cor. i. 18. 19, 20. 'As God is true, our word 'towards you was not yea and nay. For the 'Son of God, Jeſus Chriſt, who was preached 'among you by us, even by me, and Silvanus 'and Timotheus, was not yea and nay, but 'in him was yea: for all the promiſes of God 'in him are yea, and in him amen, unto the 'Glory of God by us.' Natural men, educated under goſpel ordinances, although they have ſome notional knowledge of God, Chriſt, the promiſes, the motions of the holy ſpirit, &c. ſo as they may confer, preach and diſpute of theſe things; yet they look on them as common received maxims of Chriſtianity, from which to recede were a ſingularity and diſgrace; but not as real, ſolid, ſubſtantial truths, ſo as to adventure their ſouls and everlaſting being on them. The underſtanding is renewed alſo, to take up ſomewhat of God in the creatures, as bearing ſparks of his glorious attributes, Pſal. xix. 1. They ſee 'the heavens declaring his glory and

new creation or renovation of that man is a very ſenſible change, although not in thoſe who are effectually called from the womb, or in their younger years; becauſe thoſe have had this new creature from that time in them, ſo as this change in after-periods of time is not diſcernable; yet in thoſe who have been regenerated and brought into Chriſt after they were come to greater age, and ſo havemore palpably been under the power of darkneſs, before they were tranſlated into the kingdom of Chriſt, Col. i. 13. But in all who do warrantably pretend to Chriſt, this new creature muſt be; although ſome do not know experimentally the contraries of every part of it, ſo as others do; becauſe they have not been equally in regard of practice under the power of darkneſs. This new creature is called the new man, Col. iii. 10. which doth hold out the extent of it. It is not ſimply a new tongue or new hand, but a new man. There is a principle of new life and motion put in the man, which is the new heart; which new principle of life ſendeth forth acts of life, or of 'conformity to the image of him who created it,' Col. 3. 10. ſo as the party is renewed in ſome meaſure every way. This renovation of the man who is in Chriſt, may be reduced into theſe two great heads.

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'power;' and ſomewhat of God in providence and diſpenſations that fall out: 'His wondrous 'works declare that his name is near,' Pſal. lxxv. 1. The underſtanding alſo taketh up the conditions and caſes of the ſoul, otherways than it was wont to do; as we find the ſaints uſually ſpeaking in ſcripture, 'O my ſoul, thou haſt ſaid unto the Lord, thou art my Lord,' Pſal. xvi. 2. 'My ſoul ſaid, thy face will I ſeek,' Pſal. xxvii. 8. 'Why art thou caſt down, O my ſoul?' Pſal. xlii. 5. Pſal. xliii. 5. 'Return unto thy 'reſt, O my ſoul,' Pſal. cxvi. 7.

II. The heart and affections are renewed. The heart is made a new heart, a heart of fleſh, capable of impreſſions, having a copy of his law ſtamped on it, and the fear of God put into it, whereby the man's duty becometh in a manner native and kindly to the man, Jer. 32. 39, 40. Ezek. 36. 26. It was before a heart of ſtone, void of the fear of God. The affections are renewed now: the love is renewed in ſome good meaſure; it goeth out after God, 'I will love 'the Lord,' Pſal. xviii. 1. After his law, 'O 'how love I thy Law!' Pſal. cxix. 97. after thoſe who have God's image in them, John. xiii. 35. 'By this ſhall all men know that ye are 'my diſciples, if ye have love one to another.' 1 John iii. 14. 'We know that we have paſ-'ſed from death unto life; becauſe we love the 'brethren.' This love to God's people is upon a pure account, as they are the children of God, and do keep his ſtatutes. 1 Peter i. 22. It is 'with a pure heart fervently;' and therefore it

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goeth out towards all ſuch, whom the man knoweth or apprehendeth to be ſuch, Pſal. cxix. 63. 'I am a companion of all them that fear 'thee, and of them that keep thy precepts, in all caſes and conditions, even where there is nothing to beautify or commend, but the image of God. And this love is ſo fervent many times, 1 Pet. i. 22. that it putteth itſelf out in all relations, ſo as a man ſeeketh a godly wife, a godly maſter, a godly ſervant, a godly counſeller, if he have to chooſe upon, Pſal. ci. 6. 'Mine 'eyes ſhall be upon the faithful of the, land 'that they may dwell with me: he that walk-'eth in a perfect way, he ſhall ſerve me. And 'it is not quenched by many waters,' Cant. viii. 7. Many imperfections and infirmities, difference in opinion, wrongs received, will not altogether quench love. Alſo it is communicative of good according to its meaſure, and as the caſe of the poor godly requireth, Pſal. xvi. 2. 'Thou art my Lord, my goodneſs extendeth 'not to thee, but to the ſaints, &c.' 1 John iii. 17, 18, 19. 'But whoſo hath this world's good, 'and ſeeth his brother have need, and ſhutteth 'up his bowels of compaſſion from him, how 'dwelleth the love of God in him? my little 'children let us not love in word, neither in 'tongue, but in deed, and in truth. And here-'by we know that we are of the truth and ſhall 'aſſure our hearts before him.' The man's hatred is alſo renewed, and is now bended againſt ſin, Pſal. cxix. 113. 'I hate vain thoughts:' againſt God's enemies, as ſuch, Pſal. cxxxix. 21,

22. 'Do not I hate them that hate thee?' &c. The joy or delight is renewed, for it runneth towards God, Pſal. lxviii. 25. 'Whom have I 'in heaven but thee? and there is none upon 'earth that I deſire beſides thee,' towards his law and will, Pſal. i. 2. 'His delight is in the 'law of the Lord;' and towards the godly and their fellowſhip, Pſal. xvi. 3. 'To the ſaints 'in whom is all my delight.' The ſorrow is turned againſt ſin which hath wronged Chriſt, Zech. xii. 10. 'Looking to him whom they have 'pierced, they mourn,' 1 Cor. vii. 11. 'The 'ſorrow is godly' there, and againſt what encroacheth upon God's honour. 'They are ſor-'rowful for the ſolemn aſſembly, and the re-'proach of that is their burden,' Zeph. iii. 18. There is ſome renovation in all the affections, as in every other part of the ſoul pointing now towards God.

III. The very outward members of the man are renewed, as the ſcripture ſpeaks, the tongue, the eye, the ear, the hand, the foot, &c. ſo that 'thoſe members which once were im-'proved as weapons of unrighteouſneſs unto ſin, 'are now improved as weapons of righteouſneſs 'unto holineſs,' Rom. vi. 19.

Secondly. A man who is in Chriſt, is renewed in ſome meaſure in all his ways: 'Behold, all 'things are become new,' 2 Cor. v. 17. The man becometh new.

1. In the way of his intereſt, he was upon any good before, tho' but apparent, and at beſt but external, Pſal. iv. 6. 'Many ſay, who will ſhew

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'us any good?' but now his intereſt and buſineſs, is how to be found in Chriſt in that day, Phil. iii. 9. or how to be forthcoming to him, and 'walk before him in the light of the living,' Pſal. lvi. 13. which he would chooſe among all the mercies that fill this earth, Pſal. cxix. 64. 'The earth, O Lord, is full of thy 'mercy, teach me thy ſtatutes.' The intereſt of Chriſt alſo becometh the man's intereſt, as appeareth in the ſong of Hannah, 1 Sam. ii. and in the ſong of Mary, Luke i. It is ſtrange to ſee people newly converted, and having reached but the beginnings of knowledge, concern and intereſt themſelves in the publick matters of Chriſt's kingdom, ſo deſirous to have him riding proſperouſly, and ſubduing the people under him.

II. The man that is in Chriſt, is renewed in the way of his worſhip. He was wont to 'ſerve 'God in the oldneſs of the letter,' for the faſhion, anſwering the letter of the command in the outſide of duty, which one in whom the old man hath abſolute dominion can do: but now he worſhippeth 'God in newneſs of ſpirit,' Rom. vii. 6. in a new way wherein he is 'helped by 'the ſpirit of God,' Rom. viii. 26. beyond the reach of fleſh and blood. He 'ſerveth now the 'true and living God,' 1 Theſ. i. 9. 'in ſpirit 'and in truth,' John iv. 24. having ſpiritual apprehenſions of God, and engaged in his [illegible] ſoul in that work, doing and ſaying truly [illegible] not feignedly when he worſhippeth; ſtill 'de-'ſiring to approach unto him as a living God,'

who

who heareth and seeth him, and can accept his service, Psal. xlii. 1, 2. I grant, he fails of this many times; yet I may say, such worship he intendeth, and sometimes overtaketh; and doth not much reckon that worship, which is not so performed unto God; and the iniquity of his holy things is not the least part of his burden and exercise. Such a worship natural men are strangers unto, whilst they babble out their vainglorious boastings, like the Pharisee, Luke xviii. 11, 12. 'to an unknown God,' Acts xvii. 23.

III. The man that is in Christ is renewed in the way of his outward calling and imployment in the world; he now resolveth to be about it, because God hath commanded so, 'not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the 'Lord,' Rom. 12. 11. and to eye God in it as the last end, 'doing it to his glory,' 1 Cor. x. 31. and studieth to keep some intercourse with God in the exercise of his outward employments as Jacob doth in his latter will, Gen. xlix. 18. 'I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord.' And as Nehemiah did, Nehem. ii. 4. 'Then the king 'said unto me, for what dost thou make request? 'So I prayed to the God of heaven.' So as the man resolveth to walk with God, 'and set him 'always before him,' Psal. xvi. 8. wherein, I deny not, he faileth often.

IV. He becometh new in the way of his relations; he becometh a more dutiful husband, father, brother, master, servant, neighbour &c. 'Herein doth he exercise himself to keep 'a conscience void of offence towards men as well

'well as towards God,' Acts xxiv. 16. 'be-
'coming all things to all men,' 1 Cor. ix. 22.

V. He becometh new in the way of lawful liberties; he ſtudieth to make uſe of meat, drink, ſleep, recreations, apparel, with an eye to God, labouring not to come under the power of any lawful thing, 1 Cor. vi. 12. 'All 'things are lawful unto me, but all things are 'not expedient; all things are lawful for me, 'but I will not be brought under the power of 'any.' [illegible] to give offence to others in the uſe of the[illegible] things, Rom. 14. 20, 21. 'For meat de-'ſtroy[illegible]not the work of God; all things indeed 'are pure, but [illegible] evil for that man who eat-'eth with offence: it is good neither to eat 'fleſh, nor [illegible] drink wine, nor any thing 'whereby thy brother ſtumbleth, or is offend-'ed, or [illegible]made weak,' Rom. xv. 2. 'Let 'every [illegible] of us pleaſe his neighbour for his 'good to edification, not uſing liberty as an 'occaſion to the fleſh,' Gal. 5. 13. Yea he la-boureth to uſe all theſe things as a ſtranger on earth, ſo as his moderation may appear, Phil. iv. 5. 'Let your moderation be known unto all 'men.' And ſome way he doth eye God as the laſt end in theſe things, 1 Cor. x. 31. Doing all to the glory of God: ſo as we may ſay of that man; 'Old things are much paſt away, 'all things are in ſome meaſure, become new,' 2 Cor. v. 17. He that is ſo a new creature, is undoubtedly in Chriſt.

This renovation of a man in all manner of converſation, and this being under law to God

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in all things, is that 'holineſs without which 'no man ſhall ſee the Lord.' Heb. xii. 14. Men may fancy things to themſelves, but unleſs they ſtudy to approve themſelves unto God in all well-pleaſing, and reach ſome inward teſtimony of ſincerity that way, they ſhall not aſſure their hearts before him. 'The teſtimony 'of men's conſcience is their rejoicing. 2 Cor. i. 12. 'By this we know that we know him, 'if we keep his commandments.' 1 John ii 3. 'And hereby we know that we are of the truth 'and ſhall aſſure our hearts before him, for if 'our heart condemn us, God is greater than 'our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved 'if our heart condemn us not, then have we 'confidence towards God,' 1 John iii. 19, 20, 21. No confidence if the heart condemn. This is the new creature, having a principle of new ſpiritual life infuſed by God into the heart, whereby it becometh new, and putteth forth acts of new life throughout the whole man, as we have ſaid, ſo as he pointeth towards the whole law: both towards theſe commands, which forbid ſin; ſo he reſolveth to ſet againſt ſecret ſins, not to 'lay a ſtumbling-block before the blind,' Lev. xix. 14. Little ſins which are judged ſo by many the leaſt things of the law, Mat. v. 19. 'Whoſoever ſhall break one of theſe leaſt command-'ments, and ſhall teach men ſo, he ſhall be cal-'led the leaſt in the kingdom of heaven.' ſpiritual filthineſs of the ſpirit, 2 Cor. vii. 1. 'Having therefore theſe promiſes, dearly be-'loved, let us cleanſe ourſelves, from all

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'filthineſs of the fleſh and ſpirit, perfect-
'ing holineſs in the Fear of God.' Sins of o-miſſion as well as of commiſſion, ſince men are to be judged by theſe, Mat. xxv. 41, 42, 43, 44, 45. 'Then ſhall he ſay unto them on the 'left hand, depart from me, ye curſed, into 'everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and 'his angels; for I was an hungred, and ye 'gave me no meat, I was thirſty and ye gave 'me no drink,' &c. Yea, ſins that are winded in into his natural humour and conſtitution, and ſo are as a right eye or hand to him, Mat. v. 29. 'If thy right-eye offend thee, pluck 'it out and caſt it from thee,' &c. This new principle of life, by the good hand of God, maketh the man ſet againſt every known ſin, ſo far as not to allow peaceable abode to any known darkneſs, 2 Cor. vi. 14. 'What fellow-'ſhip hath righteouſneſs with unrighteouſneſs? 'And what communion hath light with dark-'neſs?' As alſo he pointeth towards thoſe commands which relate to duty, and the quick-ning of grace in man: it maketh a man reſpect all God's known commands, Pſal. cxix. 6. To live godly righteouſly, and ſoberly, Tit. ii. 12. Yea, and to ſtudy a right and ſincere way and manner of doing things, reſolving not to give over this ſtudy of conformity to God's will, whilſt he liveth on earth, but ſtill to 'preſs 'forward toward the mark, for the prize of 'the high calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus,' Phil. iii. 13, 14. This is true holineſs, very becoming all thoſe who pretend to be heirs of that fellow-

fellowſhip of a holy God, 1 John iii. 3. 'We holy habitation, in the immediate company and 'know that when he ſhall appear, we ſhall be 'like him.'

Some may think theſe things high attainments and very hard to be won at. I grant it is true: But, firſt, Remember that there is a very large allowance in the covenant, promiſed to his people, which maketh things more eaſy. The Lord hath engaged to 'take away the ſtony 'heart, to give a heart of fleſh, a new heart, 'an heart to fear him for ever; he hath en-'gaged to put his law in mens heart, to put 'his fear in their heart, to make them keep 'that law; to put his ſpirit in them, to cauſe 'them keep it. He hath promiſed to ſatisfy the 'prieſts with fatneſs, that the ſouls of the peo-'ple may be ſatiated with his goodneſs, and to 'keep and water them continually every mo-'ment,' Ezek. xxxvi. 26. Jer. xxxii. 39, 40. Jer. xxxi. 33. Ezek. xxxvi. 27. Jer. xxxi. 14. Jer. xxxi. 12. Iſa. xxvii. 3. And if he muſt be enquired to do all theſe things unto men, Ezek. xxxvi. 37. 'He engageth to pour out the ſpi-'rit of grace and ſuplication on them,' Ezek. xii. 10. And ſo to learn them how to ſeek theſe things, and how to put him to it, to do all for them.

Secondly, For the ſatisfaction of the weaker, I grant this new creature, as we have circumſcribed and enlarged it, will not be found in all the degrees of it, in every gracious perſon. But it is well if,

I. There

1. There be a new man: we cannot grant leſs; 'If any man be in Chriſt, he is a new 'creature,' 2 Cor. v. 17. And that is the new man, which all muſt put on who are ſavingly taught of Chriſt, Eph. iv. 21, 22, 23, 24. 'If 'ſo be that ye have heard him, and have been 'taught by him, as the truth is in Jeſus; 'that ye put of concerning the former conver-'ſation, the old man which is corrupt accord-'ing to the deceitful luſts; and be renewed 'in the Spirit of your mind; and that ye put 'on the new man, which after God is created 'in righteouſneſs and true holineſs.' There muſt be ſome renewing after the image of God in a man's ſoul and body; there muſt be ſome-what of every part of the man pointing towards God; although I grant every one cannot inſtruct this to others, neither diſcern it in himſelf, becauſe many know not the diſtinct parts of the ſoul, nor pieces of reformation competent to every part of the ſoul and body; yet it will be found there is ſome ſuch thing in them, yea, they have a witneſs of it within them, if you make the thing plain and clear to them what it is.

II. There muſt be ſuch a reſpect unto God's known commands, that a man do not allow peaceably any known iniquity to dwell in him; for, 'What fellowſhip hath righteouſneſs with 'unrighteouſneſs; and what communion hath 'light with darkneſs? 2 Cor. vi. 14, 15, 16. He muſt not regard iniquity. Pſal. cxix. 6. 'Then 'ſhall I not be aſhamed, when I have reſpect 'unto all thy commandments.' Pſal. lxvi. 18.

'If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord 'will not hear me.' I grant men may be ignorant of many commands and many ſins, and may imagine in ſome caſes, that ſome ſins are not hateful unto God; but ſuppoſing that they are inſtructed in theſe things, there can be no agreement between righteouſneſs and unrighteouſneſs.

III. Men muſt point towards all the law of God in their honeſt reſolutions; for this is nothing elſe than to give up the heart unto God, to put his law in it without exception, which is a part of the covenant we are to make with God, Heb. viii. 10. 'This is the covenant that 'I will make with the houſe of Iſrael-----I will 'put my laws into their mind, and write them 'in their hearts.' I grant many know not how to point towards God's laws in all their ways; but if it be made manifeſt unto them how that ſhould be done, they will point at it. And it is true, they will many times fail of their reſolutions in their practice; yet when they have failed, they can ſay, they did reſolve otherways, and will yet honeſtly, and without guile, reſolve to do otherways, and it will prove their affliction to have failed of their reſolution, when the Lord diſcovereth it to them, which he will do in due time.

IV. When we are to judge of our ſtate by the new creature, we muſt do it at a convenient time, when we are in good caſe, at leaſt not when we are in the worſt caſe; for 'the fleſh and ſpirit do luſt and fight againſt

'other,'

'other,' Gal. v. 17. And ſometimes the other doth prevail. Now, I ſay, we muſt chooſe a convenient time, when the ſpiritual part is not by ſome tentation worſted and overpowered by the fleſh; for, in that caſe, the new creature is recoiled back in its ſtreams, and much returned to the fountain and the habits, except in ſome ſmall things not eaſily diſcernable, whereby it maketh oppoſition to the fleſh, according to the foreſaid ſcripture; for, now is it the time of winter in the ſoul, and we may not expect fruit, yea, not leaves, as in ſome other ſeaſon; only here, leſt profane Atheiſts ſhould make advantage of this, we will ſay, That the ſpirit doth often prevail over the fleſh in a godly man, and the ſcope, aim, tenor, and main drift of his way is in the law of the Lord, that is, his walk, Pſal. cxix. 1. Whereas the path-way, and ordinary courſe, of the wicked is ſin, as is often hinted in the book of the Proverbs of Solomon. And if it happen that a godly man be overmaſtered by any tranſgreſſion, ordinarily it is his ſad exerciſe; and we ſuppoſe he keeps it ſtill in dependency before God, to have it rectified, as David ſpeaketh, Pſal. lvi. 13. 'Wilt thou not deliver my 'feet from falling?'

CHAP. X.

The difference between a truly renewed man who is in Chriſt, and hypocrites.

Object. ATheiſts and hypocrites may have great changes and renovations

wrought upon them, and in them, and I fear mine be ſuch.

Anſw. I grant that Atheiſts and Hypocrites have many things in them, which do look like the new creature. Firſt, In regard of the parts of the man, they may, 1. come to much knowledge, as Heb. vi. 4. 'They are enlightened.' 2. There may be a reel amongſt their affections, as 'they receive the word with joy, 'as he that received the ſeed into ſtony places,' Matth. xiii. 20. 3. They may reach a great deal of outward reformation in the outward man, both anent freedom from ſin, and engagement to poſitive duty, as that Phariſee did, Luke xviii. 11, 12. 'God, I thank thee that 'I am not as other men are, extortioners, un'juſt, adulterers, or even as this publican: 'I faſt twice in the week, I give tithes of all 'that I poſſeſs.' Yea, 4. in regard of their practical underſtanding, they may judge ſome things of God to be excellent; the officers ſaid, 'that never man ſpake as Chriſt,' John vii. 46.

Secondly, Hypocrites may have a great deal of profeſſion. 1. They may talk of the law and goſpel, and of the covenant, as the wicked do; Pſal. l. 16. 'What haſt thou to do to 'declare my ſtatutes, or that thou ſhouldeſt 'take my covenant in thy mouth?' 2. They may confeſs ſin openly to their own ſhame, as king Saul did, 1 Sam. xxvi. 21. 3. They may humble themſelves in ſackcloth with Ahab, 1 Kings xxi. 27. 4. They may enquire buſily

ſily after duty, and come cheerfully to receive it; Iſa. lviii. 2. 'Yet they ſeek me daily, and 'delight to know my ways, as a nation that 'did righteouſneſs, and forſook not the ordi-'nance of their God: they ask of the ordi-'nances of juſtice, they take delight in ap-'proaching to God.' 5. They may join with God's intereſt in a hard and difficult time, as Demas and other hypocrites in the book of the Acts of the Apoſtles, who afterwards fell off. 6. They may give much of their goods to God and the ſaints, as Ananias, Acts v. 1, 2 if not all their goods, 1 Cor. xiii. 3. 'Though I be-'ſtow all my goods to feed the poor, and have 'not charity, it profiteth me nothing.' 7. Yea, it is not impoſſible for ſome ſuch, being ſtraitly engaged in their credit, to 'give their bodies 'to be burnt,' as in the laſt cited place.

Thirdly, Hypocrites may advance far in the common and ordinary ſteps of a Chriſtian work; ſuch as the elect have when God leads them captive. As, 1. They may be under great convictions of ſin, as Judas was, Matth. xxvii. 3, 4, 5. So was king Saul often. 2. They may tremble at the word of God, and be under much terror, as Felix was, Acts xxiv. 25. 3. They may 'rejoice in receiving 'of the truth, as he that received the ſeed in-'to ſtony places,' Matth xiii. 20. 4. They may be in ſome peace and quiet in expectation of ſalvation by Chriſt, as the fooliſh virgins were, Matth. xxv. 5. All this may be backed and followed with ſome good meaſure of re-

formation, as the Phariſee, Luke xviii. 11, 12. 'The unclean Spirit may go out of them,' Mat. xii. 43. 6. This work may ſeem to be confirmed by ſome ſpecial experiences and taſtings of the good word of God,' Heb. vi. 4, 5.

Fourthly, Hypocrites may have ſome things very like the ſaving graces of the ſpirit; as, 1. They may have a ſort of faith with Simon Magus, Acts viii. 13, 2. They may have a ſort of repentance, and may walk mournfully, Mal. iii. 14. 'What profit is it that we have walked 'mournfully before the Lord of hoſts? 3. They may have a great fear of God, ſuch as Balaam had, who for a houſe full of gold would not go with the meſſengers of Balak, without leave asked of God, and given, Numb. xxii. 18. 4. They have a ſort of hope, Job viii. 13. 'The hypocrites hope ſhall periſh. 5. They have ſome love, ſo had as Herod John, Mark vi. 26. I need not to inſiſt, it is out of all queſtion they have counterfeits of all ſaving graces.

Fifthly, They have ſomewhat like the ſpecial communications of God, and the witneſſing of his ſpirit, and ſomewhat like the powers of the world to come, powerfuly on them, with ſome flaſhes of joy ariſing thence, as Heb. vi. 4, 5. 'For it is impoſſible for thoſe who were 'once enlightened, and have taſted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the 'holy Ghoſt: and have taſted the good word of 'God, and the powers of the world to come; 'if they fall away to renew them again unto 'repentance.' Notwithſtanding of all which,

they

they are almoſt perſuaded with Agrippa to be Chriſtians, Acts xxvi. 20. It were tedious to ſpeak particularly to each of theſe things, and to clear it up, that they are all but rotten ware: I ſhall condeſcend upon ſome few things, wherein a truly renewed man, who is in Chriſt, doth differ from hypocrites and reprobates.

I. Whatſoever change be in hypocrites, yet their heart is not changed and made new. The new heart is only given to the elect, when they are converted, and brought under the bond of the covenant. Jer. 32. 39. 'I will give them 'one heart, and one way, that they may fear 'me for ever.' Ezek. xxxvi. 26. 'A new 'heart will I give you, and a new ſpirit will I 'put within you, and I will take away the ſto-'ny heart out of your fleſh, and I will give you 'an heart of fleſh.' Hypocrites did never apprehend Chriſt as the only ſatisfying good in all the world, for which with joy they would quit all; for then the kingdom of God were entered into them, Mat. xiii. 44. 'The kingdom of 'heaven is like unto a treaſure hid in a field, 'the which when a man hath found, he hid-'eth, and for joy thereof goeth and ſelleth all 'that he hath and buyeth that field.' The truly renewed man dare and can upon good ground ſay, and hath a teſtimony of it from on high, that his heart hath been changed in taking with of Chriſt, and hath been led out after him, as the only enriching treaſure, in whom 'to be 'found, he accounteth all things elſe loſs and 'dung,' Phil. iii. 8, 9.

II. Whatſoever reformation or profeſſion hypocrites do attain unto; as it cometh not from a new heart, and pure principle of zeal for God, ſo it is always for ſome wicked and by-end, as 'to be ſeen of men,' Matt. vi. 5. or to invite and ſhun ſome outward ſtrait, to be free of God's wrath and the trouble of their own conſcience,' Iſa. lviii. 3. 'Wherefore have we 'faſted, ſay they, and thou ſeeſt not? where-'fore have we afflicted our ſoul, and thou ta-'keſt no knowledge?' Mal. 3. 14. 'What pro-'fit is it, that we have kept his ordinance, and 'that we have walked mournfully before the 'Lord of Hoſts?' In teſtimony of this, they never have reſpect to all known commands, elſe they ſhould never be aſhamed, Pſal. cxix. 6. Nor do they without approven guile in their own heart, reſolve againſt every known iniquity, elſe they were freed of heart-condemnings, and ſo might juſtly have confidence before God, 1 John ii. 21, 22. If in never ſo mean a caſe, they did, from a principle of love unto, and of zeal for Chriſt, and for a right end, confeſs and profeſs him, Chriſt were obliged by his own word 'to confeſs them before his Father,' Matt. x. 32.

III. Whatſoever length hypocrites advance in that work, by which people are led in unto Chriſt, yet they never 'ſeek firſt the Kingdom 'of God and his righteouſneſs,' Matt. vi. 33. 'The one thing that is neceſſary,' viz. Chriſt's friendſhip and fellowſhip, is never their one thing, and heart-ſatisfying choice, elſe that

'better

'better part would never be taken from them,' Luke x. 42.

IV. Whatsoever counterfeits of grace are in hypocrites, yet they are all bred there, without any saving work of the Spirit of Christ, and it is enough to exclude them from the benefit of this mark, that they are never denied to these things, nor emptied of them, but still do rest on them as their Saviour, so that 'they submit not 'unto the righteousness of God,' Rom. x. 3. And that is enough to keep them at a distance from Christ, who will never clout that old garment of hypocrites with his fine new linen, nor 'put his new wine in these old bottles,' Matt. ix. 16, 17.

V. We may say, let hypocrites, reprobates, or Atheists have what they can, they want the three great essentials of religion and true Christianity. First, they are not broken in themselves, and emptied even of their righteousness, the length of self-lothing, yet lying open for relief. Such 'lost ones Christ came to seek and 'save,' Luke xix. 10. Secondly, they never took up Christ Jesus as the only treasure and Jewel that can only enrich, and should satisfy; and therefore have never cordially agreed unto God's device in the covenant, and so are not worthy of him: neither hath the Kingdom of God savingly entered into their hearts, Matt. xiii. 44. 'The kingdom of heaven is like 'unto a treasure hid in a field, the which when 'a man hath found, he hideth; and for joy 'thereof selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that 'field.'

'field. Thirdly, they never in earneſt do cloſe with Chriſt's whole yoke without exception, judging all his 'Will, juſt and good, holy and ſpiritual,' as Rom. vii. 12. And therefore no reſt allowed on them by Chriſt. Matt. xi. 29. 'Take my 'yoke upon you, and ye ſhall find reſt unto 'your ſouls.' Therefore, whoſoever thou art, who can lay clear and juſt claim to theſe three foreſaid things, thou art beyond the reach of all Atheiſts, hypocrites and reprobates in the world, as having anſwered the great ends and intents of the law and goſpel.

Object. I am clear ſometimes, I think, to lay claim to that mark of the new creature, yet at other times ſin doth ſo prevail over me, that I am made to queſtion all the work within me.

Anſw. It is much to be lamented that, people profeſſing his name, ſhould be ſo ſlaited and enſlaved by tranſgreſſion, as many are. Yet in anſwer to the objection, if it be ſeriouſly propouned, we ſay, the ſaints are found in ſcripture juſtly laying claim unto God and his covenant, when iniquity did prevail over them, as we find, Pſal. lxv. 3, 'Iniquities prevail againſt 'me; as for our tranſgreſſions thou ſhalt purge 'them away.' Rom. vii 23, 25. Paul 'thanks 'God through Chriſt, when a law in his mem'bers leads him captive unto ſin.' But for the better underſtanding, and ſafe application, of ſuch truths, we muſt difference between gra[ce] outbreakings

outbreakings and ordinary infirmities or heart-ills, or ſins that comes unawares upon a man, without forethought or any deliberation. As for the former ſort, it is hard for a man, whilſt he is under the power of them, to ſee his gracious change, although it be in him; and very hard to draw any comfort from it, until the man be in ſome meaſure recovered, and begin ſeriouſly to reſent ſuch ſins, and to reſolve againſt them. We find David calling himſelf God's ſervant, quickly after his numbering of God's people; but he was then under the ſerious reſentment of his ſin, 2 Sam. xxiv. 10. Jonah layeth claim to God as his maſter under his rebellion; but he is then ruing it, and in a ſpirit of revenge againſt himſelf for his ſin, Jonah i. 9, 10. 12. Next, as for theſe ſins of infirmity, and daily incurſion and heart-ills ſuch as thoſe whereof Paul doth complain, it is like were;

We ſhall draw out ſome thing from that ſeventh chapter to the Romans, whereupon Paul maintains his intereſt in Chriſt, and if you can apply them, it is well. 1. When Paul findeth that he doth much fail, and cannot reach conformity to God's law, he doth not blame the law, as being too ſtrict, ſo as men cannot keep it, as hypocrites uſe to ſpeak; but he doth blame himſelf as being carnal; and he ſaith of the law, 'that it is good, holy and ſpiritual,' Rom. vii. 12, 14. 2. He can ſay, he failed of a good which he intended, and did outſhoot himſelf, and he had often honeſtly reſolved againſt the evil

evil which he fell into, Rom. vii. 15, 18, 19. 3. He saith, that the prevailing of sin over him is his exercise, so as he judgeth himself wretched because of such a body of death, from which he longeth to be delivered, Rom. vii. 24. 4. He saith, that whilst he is under the power and law of sin, there is somewhat in the bottom of his heart opposing it, although overmastered by it, which would be another way; and when he gets the upper hand, it is a delightsome thing, Rom. vii. 22, 25. Upon these things he 'thanks 'God in Christ that there is no condemnation,' Rom. vii, 25. and viii. 1. Now then look if you can lay claim to these things. 1. If you do blame yourself, and approve the law, whilst you fail. 2. If you can say, that you do often resolve against sin honestly and without known guile; and do so resolve the contrary good before the evil break in upon you. 3. If you can [illegible] that you are so far exercised with your failings, as to judge yourself wretched because of such things, and a body of death which is the root and fountain of such things. 4. If you can say, that there is a party within you opposing these evils, which would beat the right way, and, as it were, is in its element when it is in God's way, it is well, only be advised not to take rest until in some good measure you be rid of the ground to this objection, or at least, until you can very clearly say, you are waging war with these things. Now, a good help against the prevailing power of sin, is, to cleave close to Christ Jesus by faith, which as it is a desirable

part

part of sanctification, and a main piece of conformity to God's will, and most subservient unto his design in the gospel, Gal. ii. 20, 21. 'The life which I now live in the flesh, I live 'by the faith of the Son of God, who loved 'me and gave himself for me. I do not frustrate the grace of God:' And so should be much endeavoured by people, as a work pleasing unto God. John vi. 29. 'This is the work 'of God, that ye believe on him whom 'he hath sent.' So it is the ready way to draw life and sap from Christ the blessed root, for fruitfulness in all cases, as John xv. 4, 5. 'Abide in me and I in you: as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the 'vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. 'I am the vine, ye are the branches, he that a-'bideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth 'forth much fruit: for without me ye can do 'nothing.'

CHAP. XI.

Of the special Communications of God, and the singular gracious Operations of his Spirit.

Object. I Do not partake of these special communications of God, mentioned in the scripture, and actings and outgoings of his spirit, whereof gracious people often are speaking, and whereunto they attain; the want of these things maketh me much suspect my state.

Answ. I shall shortly hint some of these excellent communications, and I hope, upon a right discovery of them, there will be but small ground found for the jealous complaints of many gracious people.

First, (Beside these convictions of the spirit of God, which use to usher Christ's way into the souls of men, and these also which afterwards do ordinarily attend them) there is a seal of the spirit of God spoken of in scripture, the principal thing whereof is the sanctifying work of the holy Ghost, imprinting the draughts and lineaments of God's image and revealed will upon a man, as a seal or signet doth leave an impression and stamp of its likeness upon the thing sealed.' So it is, 2 Tim. ii. 19. 'The foundation of God standeth sure, having 'this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his. 'And, let every one that nameth the name of 'Christ depart from iniquity.' And thus I conceive the seal to be called a witness, 1 John v. 10. 'He that believeth hath the witness in him-'self; that is, the grounds upon which an interest in Christ is to be made out and proved, are in every believer; for he hath somewhat of the sanctifying work of God's spirit in him, which is a sure, although not always a clear and manifest witness.

Secondly, There is communion with God much talked of among christians, whereby they understand the sensible presence of God refreshing the soul exceedingly: but if we speak properly, communion with God is a mutual interest

interest between God and a man, who hath closed with him in Christ. It is a commonness, or a common interest between God and a man; not only is a man interested in God himself, but in all that is the Lord's; so the Lord hath a special interest in the man, and also all that belongs to him. There is a communion between husband and wife, whereby they have a special interest in other's persons, goods, gear and concernments; so is it here: there is such a communion with God, he is our God, and all things are ours, because he is ours. This communion with God all true believers have at all times, as we shall shew afterwards. I grant there is an actual improvement of that communion, whereby men do boldly meddle with any thing that belongs unto God, and do meddle with himself, as their own with much homeliness and familiarity, especially in worship, when the soul doth converse with a living God, partaking of the divine nature, growing like unto him, and sweetly travelling thro' his attributes, and with some confidence of interest, viewing these things as the man's own goods and gear: this we call communion with God in ordinances. This indeed, is not so ordinarily nor frequently made out to men, and all his people do not equally partake of it; and it is true, that what is in God, goeth not out for the behoof of the man to his apprehension equally at all times, yet certainly communion with God, properly so called, viz. That commonness of interest between God and a man who is saving

in covenant with him, doth always ſtand firm and ſure; and ſo much of communion with God in ordinances have all believers, as that their heart converſeth with a living God there, now and then, and is in ſome meaſure changed into that ſame image; and there needeth be no doubt about any further in it.

Thirdly, There is a thing which is called fellowſhip with God often miſtaken alſo among believers. If by fellowſhip be meant the walking in our duty as in the ſight of a living God, who ſeeth and heareth us, and is witneſs to all our carriage, it is a thing common unto all gracious men; they all have it habitually, and in deſign, Pſal. xvi. 8. 'I have ſet the Lord always before me.' Yea, and often they have it actually in exerciſe, when their ſpirit is in any good frame; they walk as if they ſaw God ſtanding by them, and have ſome thoughts of his favour through Chriſt: 'Truly our fellowſhip 'is with the Father, and with the Son Jeſus 'Chriſt.' 1 John i. 3. If we by fellowſhip do mean a ſweet, refreſhing, familiar, ſenſible converſing with God, which doth delight and refreſh the ſoul, beſide what the conſcience of duty doth; it is then a walking in the light of his countenance, and a good part of ſenſible preſence. And although it ſeemeth Enoch had much of it, whilſt it is ſaid, 'He walked with 'God,' Gen. v. 24. yet it is not ſo ordinary as the former, nor ſo common to all Chriſtians; for here the ſoul is filled as with marrow and fatneſs, following hard after its guide, and ſingularly

larly upheld by his right hand, Psal. lxiii. 5, 8. 'My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and 'fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with 'joyful lips; my soul followeth hard after thee, 'thy right hand upholdeth me.'

Fourthly, There is a thing which is called access unto God; and this I take to be the removing of obstructions out of the way between a man and God, so as the man is admitted to come near. We are said to have access to a great person, when doors are cast open, guards removed from about him, and we admitted to come close at him: so it is here. Now this access, in scripture is sometimes taken for Christ's preparing of the way, the removing of enmity between God and sinners, so as men now have a patent way to come unto God through Christ; Eph. ii. 18. 'For through him we both have 'an access by one spirit unto the Father.' Sometimes it is taken from the actual improvement of that access purchased by Christ, when a man finds all obstructions and differences, which do ordinarily fall in between him and God, removed: God is not uncouth to him, nor as a stranger, keeping up himself from him, or frowning on him, but the man is admitted to 'come even to his seat,' as Job xxiii. 3. of the want of this doth Job complain, Job xxiii. 8, 9. whilst he saith, 'I go forward, backward, 'to the right and left hand, and I find him not.' The first sort of access is common to all believers; they are brought near by the blood of the covenant, and are no more far off, as the

deadly enmity between God and them is removed. But access in the other sense, is dispensed more according to the Lord's absolute sovereignty and pleasure, and it is left in the power of believers to obstruct it unto themselves, until it please the Lord mercifully and freely to grant it unto them again; so it is up and down and there needs be no question as to a man's state about it.

Fifthly, There is a thing called liberty before God; and this properly is freedom, or free speaking unto God. Many do much question their state, because of the want of this now and then, since the scripture hath said, 'Where 'the Spirit is, there is liberty,' 2 Cor. iii. 17. But they do unjustly confine that liberty spoken of there, unto this free speaking before God. I grant where the spirit of the Lord doth savingly discover God's will in the scriptures to a man, there is liberty from any obligation to the ceremonial law, and from the condemning power of the moral law, and from much of that grosse darkness and ignorance which is on natural mens hearts as a veil hiding Christ in the gospel from them. I grant also, that sometimes, even this liberty which is a free communing with God, and 'ordering of our cause before him 'and filling of our mouth with arguments,' Job xxiii. 4. is granted to the godly, but not as liberty taken in the former senses. Although the Lord hath obliged himself to pour out the spirit of prayer upon all the house of David in some measure, Zech. xii. 10. yet this communi-

nication of the spirit which we call liberty or free speaking unto God, dependeth much on the Lord's absolute pleasure, when and in what measure, to allow it. This liberty, which we call freedom or free speaking with God in prayer, is sometimes much abstracted from any great confidence in the time of prayer, at least, until it draw towards the close of it; it standeth much in a vivacity of the understanding to take up the case which a man is to speak before God, so as he can order his cause: And next, there be words, or verbal expressions, elegant, suitable, and very emphatical, or powerful and pithy. There is also joined a fervency of Spirit in prayer, whereof the scripture speaketh; the soul is hot and bended, and very intent.

There is also ordinarily in this liberty, a special melting of the heart often joined with a great measure of the spirit of grace and supplication, Zech. xii. 10. So the soul is poured out before God as for a first born. Such is the liberty which many saints get before God, whilst in much brokenness of heart and fervency of spirit they are admitted to speak their mind fully to God, as a living God noticing (at least) their prayer. Sometimes this liberty is joined with confidence, and then it is not only a free, but also a bold speaking before God. It is that boldness with confidence, Eph. iii. 12. 'In whom we have boldness and access, with 'confidence by the faith of him.' This is more rarely imparted unto men than the former, yet it is ordinary. It hath in it, beside what we

speak

ſpake before, ſome influence of the ſpirit upon faith, making it put out ſome vigorous acting in prayer. There is a ſweet mournful frame of ſpirit, by which a man poureth out his heart in God's boſom, and with ſome confidence of his favour and good will, pleadeth his cauſe before him as a living God; and this is all the ſenſible preſencethat many ſaints do attain unto. There is no ground of doubt anent a man's ſtate, in the point of liberty before God, in this laſt ſenſe, becauſe there is nothing eſſential to the making up of a gracious ſtate here: ſome have it, ſome want it, ſome have it at ſome times, and not at other times, ſo that it is much up and down; yet I may ſay, gracious men may do much, by a very ordinary influence, contributing towards the attaining and retaining, or keeping of ſuch a frame of ſpirit.

Sixthly, There is a thing called influence or breathingof the ſpirit. This gracious influence, for of ſuch only do I now ſpeak, either is ordinary, and this is the operations of the holy ſpirit on the ſoul, and the habits of grace there, whereby they are ſtill kept alive, and in ſome exerciſe and acting, although not very diſcernable. This influence, I conceive doth always attend believers, and is that keeping and watering night and day, and every moment promiſed, Iſa. xxvii. 3. Or, this influence is more ſingular and ſpecial, and is that ſame to a gracious, although a withered ſoul, as the wind and breath to the dry bones, putting them in good caſe, Ezek. xxxvii. 9. 10. And as the dew or rain

to the graſs, or newly mown field or parched ground, Pſal. lxxii. 6. Such influence is meant Cant iv. 16. 'by the blowing of the ſouth-'wind, making the ſpices to flow out.' When the ſpirit moveth thus, there is an edge put upon the graces of God in the ſoul, and they are made to act more vigorouſly. This is the enlarging of the heart, by which a man doth run in the ways of God, Pſal. cxix. 32. This influence is more diſcernable than the former, and not ſo ordinarily communicated. Alſo here ſometimes the wind bloweth more upon one grace, and ſometimes more diſcernably upon another, and often upon many of the graces together; and according to the leſſer or greater meaſure of this influence, the ſoul acteth more or leſs vigorouſly towards God: and ſince faith is a created grace in the ſoul, this influence of the ſpirit is upon it, ſometimes leſs ſometimes more, and accordingly is the aſſurance of faith ſmall or great.

Seventhly, There is the hearing of prayer, often ſpoken of in ſcripture; and many many vex themſelves about it, alledging that they know nothing of it experimentally. I grant there is a favourable hearing of prayer; but we muſt remember it is two-fold: either firſt, It is ſuch a man is ſimply to believe by way of argument on ſcriptural grounds; as if I be fled unto Chriſt, and do approach unto God in him, pray according to his will, not regarding iniquity in my heart exerciſing faith about the thing I pray for, abſolutely

ſolutely or conditionally, according to the nature of the thing and promiſes anent it: I am obliged to believe that God heareth my prayer, and will give what is good, according, to theſe ſcriptures, John xiv. 13, 14. 'Whatſoever ye 'ask in my name, I will do it.' 1 John v. 14. 'This is our confidence, that whatſoever we 'ask according to his will, he heareth us.' Mark xi. 24. 'Believe that ye receive, and ye 'ſhall have what ye deſire.' Pſal. lxvi. 18. 'If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will 'not hear. Then If I regard not iniquity, I may believe that he doth hear me. Or, Secondly, A man doth ſenſibly perceive that God heareth his prayer: it is made out to his heart, without any ſyllogiſtical deduction. Such a hearing of prayer got Hannah, 1 Sam. i. 18. 'Her countenance was no more ſad.' Surely the Lord did breath upon her faith, and made her believe that ſhe was heard: ſhe could not make it out by any argument; for ſhe had no grounds whereupon to build the premiſſes of the argument, according to ſcripture, in that particular: God did ſtamp it ſome way upon her heart ſenſibly, and ſo made her to believe it. This is but rarely granted, eſpecially in caſes clearly deducible in ſcripture; therefore people are much to be ſatisfied in exerciſing their faith about the other, and ought to leave it to God to give of this latter what he pleaſeth, a man's gracious ſtate ſhould not be brought upon debate, upon the account of ſuch hearing of prayer.

Eighthly,

Eighthly, There is assurance of God's favour by the witnessing of our own spirits; which assurance is deduced by way of argument syllogistically thus: whosoever believeth on Christ shall never perish; but I do believe on Christ: therefore, I shall never perish. Whoso hath respect unto all God's commandments, shall never be ashamed; but I have respect unto all his commands, Therefore, I shall never be ashamed. I say, by reasoning thus, and comparing spiritual things with spiritual things, a man may attain unto a good certainty of his gracious state. It is supposed, 1 John iii. 18, 19. that 'by loving the brethren in deed, and in truth, we 'may assure our hearts before God, and that 'a man may rejoice upon the testimony of a 'good conscience, 2 Cor. i. 12. A man 'may 'have confidence towards God, if his heart do 'not condemn him, 1 John iii. 21. We may then attain unto some assurance, altho' not full assurance, by the witness of our own spirits. I do not deny, that in this witnessing of our spirits towards assurance, there is some concurrence of the spirit of God: but I conceive there needeth but a very ordinary influence, without which we can do nothing. Now, this assurance, such as it is, may be reached by intelligent believers, who keep a good conscience in their walk. So I hope, their needs be no debate about it, as to a man's gracious state; for if a man will clear himself of heart-condemnings, he will speedily reach this assurance.

Ninthly,

Ninthly, There is a witnessing of God's Spirit, mentioned, Rom. viii. 16. 'Bearing witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.' This operation of the spirit is best understood, if we produce any syllogism by which our spirit doth witness our sonship; as for example, whosoever loveth the brethren is past from death to life, and consequently is in Christ; but I love the brethren: therefore, I am past from death to life, Here there is a threefold operation of the spirit, or three operations rather: the first is a beam of divine light upon the first proposition, persuading the divine authority of it, as the word of God. The Spirit of the Lord must witness the divinity of the scripture, and that it is the infallible word of God, far beyond all other arguments that can be used for it. The second operation is a glorious beam of light from the spirit, shining upon the second proposition, and so upon his own graces in the soul, discovering them to be true graces, and such as the scripture calleth so. Thus we are said to 'know by his Spirit the 'things that are freely given unto us of God,' 1 Cor. ii. 13. The third operation is in order to the third proposition of the argument, or the conclusion, and this I conceive to be nothing else but an influence upon faith, strengthening it to draw a conclusion of full assurance upon the foresaid premisses.

Now, (with submission unto others, who have greater light in the scripture and more experience of these precious communications) I do

conceive

conceive the witness of the spirit, or witnessing of it, which is mentioned, Rom. viii. 16. 'The 'spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits that 'we are the children of God,' is not that first operation upon the first proposition: for that operation is that testimony of the spirit, by which he beareth witness to the divinity of the whole scripture, and asserteth the divine authority of it unto the souls of gracious men: and such an operation may be upon a truth of scripture, which doth not relate to a man's sonship or interest in Christ at all. The spirit may so shine upon any truth relating to duty, or any other fundamental truth persuading the divinity of it, upon and unto the soul, and speak nothing relating to a man's interest in Christ. Neither is the third operation of the spirit, by which he makes faith boldly draw the conclusion, this witnessing of the spirit; for that operation is nothing else but an influence upon faith, bringing it out to full assurance: but that whereupon this full assurance is drawn or put out, is somewhat deponed and witnessed already: therefore I conceive the second operation of the spirit upon the second proposition, and so upon the graces in the man, is that witness of God's spirit, that beam of divine light shining upon those graces, whereby they are made very conspicuous to the understanding: that is the witness, the shining so on them is his witnessing: for only here in this proposition, and in this operation, doth the Spirit of God prove a co-witness with our spirit: for the main thing wherein

the witneſs of our ſpirit lieth, is in the ſecond propoſition, and ſo the Spirit of God, witneſſing with our ſpirits, is alſo in that ſame propoſition. So theſe two witneſſes have deponed and witneſſed one and the ſame thing, viz. The truth and reality of ſuch and ſuch graces in the man, which our own ſpirit or conſcience doth depone, according to its knowledge, and the Spirit of the Lord doth certainly affirm and witneſs to be ſo; there is a ſentence drawn forth, and a concluſion of the man's ſonſhip by the man's faith, breathed upon by the ſpirit for that effect: and this concluſion beareth the full aſſurance of a man's ſonſhip. It may be preſumed, that ſome true ſaints do not partake of this all their days, as Heb. ii. 15. 'And deli-'ver them who through fear of death were all 'their lifetime ſubject to bondage'.

Tenthly, I ſpeak with the experience of many ſaints, and I hope according to ſcripture, if I ſay there is a communication of the ſpirit of God which is left out to ſome of his people ſometimes, that is ſomewhat beſide, if not beyond that witneſſing of a ſonſhip ſpoken of before. It is a glorious divine manifeſtation of God unto the ſoul, ſhedding abroad God's love in the heart. It is a thing better felt than ſpoken of. It is no audible voice, but it is a waff of glory filling the ſoul with God, as he is life, light, love and liberty, countervailing that audible voice, 'O man greatly beloved,' Dan. x. 19. putting a man in a tranſport with this on his heart, 'It is good to be here,' as Matt. xvii. 4.

It

It is that which went out from Chriſt to Mary, when he but mentioned her name, John xx. 16. 'Jeſus ſaith unto her, Mary. She turned her-'ſelf, and ſaith unto him, Rabboni which is to 'ſay, maſter.' He had ſpoken ſome words to her before, and ſhe underſtood not that it was he: but when he uttereth this one word Mary, there was ſome admirable divine conveyance and manifeſtation made out unto her heart, by which ſhe was ſo ſatisfyingly filled, that there was no place for arguing and diſputing whether or no that was Chriſt, and if ſhe had any intereſt in him. That manifeſtation made faith to itſelf; and did purchaſe credit and truſt to itſelf, and was equivalent with 'Thus ſaith the 'Lord.' This is ſuch a glance of glory, that it may in the higheſt ſenſe be called, the earneſt or firſt-fruits 'of the inheritance,' Eph. i. 14. for it is a felt armful of the Holy God, almoſt wholly conforming the man unto his likeneſs, ſo ſwallowing him up, that he forgetteth all things except the preſent manifeſtation. O how glorious is this manifeſtation of the ſpirit! faith here riſeth to ſo full an aſſurance, that it reſolveth wholly into ſenſible embracements of God. This is the thing which doth beſt deſerve the title of ſenſible preſence, and, it is like, is not given unto all believers, ſome whereof 'are all their days, under bondage, and in 'fear, Heb. ii. 15. But here love, almoſt perfect, 'caſteth out fear,' 1 John iv. 18. This is ſo abſolutely let out upon the maſter's pleaſure, and ſo tranſient, and paſſing, or quickly

gone when it is, that no man may bring his gracious state upon debate for want of it.

Eleventhly, There is a thing we call peace, about which many do vex themselves. This peace is either anent a man's state that he is reconciled unto God by Jesus Christ, or it is anent his present case and condition, that he is walking so as approven of God, at least, so far as there is no quarrel or controversy between God and him threatning a stroke. Both of these are either such in the court of scripture, and consequently in God's account; or in the court of a man's own conscience. Peace anent a man's state, as being in Christ, is sure in the court of scripture and of heaven, when a man doth by faith close with Christ and the new covenant, Rom. v. 1. 'Being justified by faith, we have 'peace with God.' It being sure and solid in the court of scripture, it should hold sure in the court of a man's conscience, it being rightly informed; for in that case, it still speaks according to scripture: but, because often the conscience is mis-informed, and in the dark; therefore there is often peace anent a man's state according to scripture, whilst his conscience doth threaten the contrary, and do still condemn, and refuseth to assoil the man, as being reconciled unto God through Christ. In this case, the conscience must be informed, and the man's gracious state made out by the marks of grace, as we showed before, and here the witness of my own spirit will do much to allay the cry of the conscience, and if the spirit of the Lord join

his

his witneſs and teſtimony, the conſcience is perfectly ſatisfied, and proclaimeth peace to the man.

The other peace, anent a man's preſent caſe or condition, viz. that it is approven of God in a goſpel-ſenſe, it may be wanting, and juſtly wanting, although the peace anent a man's ſtate be ſure. This peace anent a man's caſe and condition, is either ſuch in the court of ſcripture, and this is when a man is not regarding iniquity, and reſpecting the commands of God without exception; then the ſcripture ſaith, he ſtands in an even place, and he needeth fear no ſtated quarrel between God and him, in order to a temporary ſtroke; and when it is thus, his conſcience ſhould alſo abſoil him that ſame way, and would do ſo, if it were rightly informed: but becauſe the conſcience is often in the dark, therefore a man may be alarmed with evil in the court of conſcience, as if he were juſtly to expect a ſtroke from God becauſe of his ſin, and ſome quarrel God hath at him, although he intend ſalvation for him. This is enough to keep a man in diſquiet, and to inhibit him the rejoycing allowed unto him, whilſt he is walking in his integrity: therefore a man muſt here alſo inform his conſcience, and receive no accuſations nor condemnings from it, unleſs it make them clear by ſcripture. At that bar let every man ſtand, both anent his ſtate, and his condition or caſe; and let him appeal from all other courts to that, and not receive any indictment, but conform to the truth of God, by which the

conſcience is to proceed in all things. And if this were well looked unto, there would not be ſo many groundleſs ſuſpicions among the Lord's people, either anent their ſtate, or their condition, upon every thought which entereth their mind.

Twelfthly, There is the joy of the Holy Ghoſt; and this is when the ſpirit doth breathe upon our rejoicing in God, (which is a grace very little in exerciſe with many) and maketh it ſet out ſenſibly and vigorouſly; and he exciteth and ſtirreth the paſſion of joy and delight in the ſoul, ſo as there is an unſpeakable and glorious joy in the ſoul, in the apprehenſion of God's friendſhip and nearneſs unto him. 1 Pet. i. 8. 'In whom, though now ye ſee him not, 'yet believing, ye rejoyce with joy unſpeakable 'and full of glory.' This joy followeth upon peace, and peace, followeth righteouſneſs, Rom. xiv. 17. 'The kingdom of God—is righte-'ouſneſs, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt.' This joy readily will not fail to be according to the meaſure of the aſſurance of faith, as 1 Pet. i. 8. 'In whom believing ye rejoice:' ſo that the removal of miſtakes about other things will allay doubts anent this.

Now becauſe ſome of theſe excellent communications of the ſpirit, after they are gone, are brought in queſtion as deluſions of Satan: for vindication of them, we ſay, that the ſpecial operations of God's Spirit in any high degree, uſually are communicated to people after ſuch [illegible]

'hear joy and gladneſs, that the bones which 'thou haſt broken may rejoice.' After ſo ſingular pains in religious duty, Dan. ix. 3, 21. 'And I ſet my face unto the Lord God, to ſeek 'by prayer and ſupplication, with faſting and 'ſackcloth, and aſhes. And whiles I was ſpeak-'ing, and praying, and confeſſing my ſin—'the man Gabriel whom I had ſeen in the vi-'ſion at the beginning, being cauſed to fly 'ſwiftly, touched me.' Or in time of ſuch ſuffering for righteouſneſs, 1 Pet. iv. 13, 14. 'Rejoice, in as much as ye are partakers of 'Chriſt's ſufferings; that when his glory ſhall 'be revealed, ye may be glad alſo with exceed-'ing joy. If ye be reproached for the name 'of Chriſt, happy are ye; for the ſpirit of glo-'ry, and of God reſteth upon you.' Or if they break in as the rain that waiteth not for man, then they do ſo humble and abaſe the perſon, Iſa. vi. 5. 'Wo is me, for I am undone, be-'cauſe I am a man of unclean lips.—for mine 'eyes have ſeen the King, the Lord of Hoſts.' And there are found ſo many evidences of grace in the man, Rom. viii. 16. 'The ſpirit itſelf 'beareth witneſs with our ſpirit, that we are 'the children of God.' Or theſe things do ſo provoke unto holineſs, and to have every thing anſwerable and conform unto thoſe manifeſtations of God, 2 Tim. ii. 19. 'Let every one that 'nameth the name of Chriſt, depart from ini-'quity.' The perſon under them doth ſo loathe all things beſide God's friendſhip and fellow-[illegible] xvii. 4. 'Peter ſaith unto Jeſus,

'Lord, it is good for us to be here.' And these things do carry on them and with them so much authority and divine superscription, whilst they are in the soul, that afterwards they may appear sufficiently to be special communications of God, and singular gracious operations of his spirit, and no delusions of 'Satan transforming himself into an Angel of light,' 2 Cor. xi. 14. Nor such common flashes of the spirit as may admit afterwards irrecoverable apostasy from God, Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6. 'For it is impossible for those who were once enlightned, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come; if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance.'

Now then to conclude this part of the work that relateth unto trial; I say to all these who complain of the want of the precious outlettings of the spirit, 1st, Bless God if you want nothing essential for making out of a saving interest in Christ, God hath given unto you Christ Jesus, the greatest gift he had, and since your heart is shapen out for him, he will with him give you all things that are good for you in their season. 2dly, I do believe, upon a right search and trial, after you have understood the communications of the spirit, you are not so great a stranger to many things as you did suspect yourself to be. But, 3dly, remember the promises of life and of peace with God, are no where, in Scripture, made unto these special things

whereof you alledge the want: the promises are made unto faith, followed with holiness; and it may be presumed, that many heirs of glory do not in this life partake of some of these things, but are 'in bondage all their days 'through fear of death,' Heb. ii. 15. So that there should be no mistake about these things; we may seek after them, but God is free to give or withhold them: 4thly, many do seek after such manifestations before they give credit by faith unto God's word. He hath born record, that there is life enough for men in Christ Jesus, and if men would by believing set to their seal that God is true, they should partake of more of these excellent things. 5thly, I may say, many have not honourable apprehensions and thoughts of the Spirit of God, whose proper work it is to put out the foresaid noble operations. They do not adore him as God, but vex, grieve, quench, and resist him: and many people complaining of the want of these things, are not at the pains to seek the spirit in his outgoings, and few do set themselves apart for such precious receipts: therefore be at more pains in religion, give more credit to his word, and esteem more highly of the Spirit of God, and so you may find more of these excellent things.

PART

PART II.

How to attain to a saving interest in CHRIST.

HAVING, in the former part of this treatise, put every man's state to trial, It now remains, that in this following part, we give advice to those, who neither can, nor dare lay claim to the marks formerly mentioned.

Quest. II. What shall they do who want the marks of a true and saving interest in Christ, already spoken of, and neither can nor dare pretend unto them?

Answ. If men miss in themselves the marks of a saving interest in Christ, spoken of before, then it is their duty, and of all that hear this gospel, personally and heartily to close with God's device of saving sinners by Christ Jesus, and this shall secure their state.

CHAP. I.

Some things premised for the information of those who are more ignorant.

FOR the better understanding of this we shall premise some things for information of those who are more ignorant, and then speak more directly to the thing. As for the things to be premised,

I. The Lord did at the beginning, out of his

his bounty, make a covenant with man in Adam, Gen. ii. 16, 17. and did enable man to abide in that covenant, Eccles. vii. 29. 'God 'hath made man upright;' but man by eating of that forbidden fruit, Gen. 3. did break that covenant. Hos. vi. 7, 'They like Adam 'have transgressed the covenant,' and made it void for ever, Rom. iii. 20. 'By the deeds of 'the law, there shall no flesh be justified in his 'sight,' and involved himself into all misery thereby, Rom v. 12. 'As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and 'so death passed upon all men for that all have 'sinned.'

II. The Lord did most freely, from everlasting purpose and intend to save man another way, viz. by Christ Jesus and the covenant of grace, in which he intended reconcilement with the elect thro' Christ Jesus, God and man born of a woman in due time, to make this agreement effectual. And this device of satisfying his own justice and saving of the elect by Christ, he did at first intimate to our parents in paradise, Gen. iii. 15. where he saith, 'That the seed of the 'woman shall bruise the serpent's head.' And the Lord hath in all generations made this known to his church.

III. The Lord hath in all ages covenanted to be the reconciled God of all these, who by their subjection to his ordinances, did profess their satisfaction with this device, and oblige themselves to acquiesce in the same and to seek salvation by Christ Jesus, as God doth offer him

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in the gospel; so all the people of Israel are called the Lord's people, and are said to avouch him to be their God, and he doth avouch them to be his people, Exod. xix. 5, 8. Deut. xxvi. 17, 18. Yea, the Lord doth also engage himself to be the God of the seed and children of those who do so subject to his ordinances. The covenant is said to be 'made between God and 'all the people, young and old, present and not 'present that day,' Deut. xxix. 10, 11,---15, And all are appointed to come under some seal of that covenant, as was enjoined to Abraham, Gen. xvii. 10. Not only was it so in the old testament, but it is so in the new testament also: the Lord makes offer of himself to be our God in Christ Jesus: and the people professing their satisfaction in that offer, and in testimony thereof subjecting themselves unto the ordinances, they are reckoned a covenanted people, and are joined unto his church in thousands, receiving a seal of the covenant without any further particular previous trial, Acts ii. 38,--41. 'Then 'Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized 'every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ 'for the remission of Sins----Then they that 'gladly received the word were baptized, and 'the same day there were added unto them a-'bout three thousand souls.'

IV. Many do deal treacherously with God in this covenant, Psal. lxxviii. 36, 37. 'Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth 'and they lied unto him with their tongues; 'for their heart was not right with him, nei-

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'ther were they ſtedfaſt in his covenant.' And altho' they profeſs their eſtimation of Chriſt the Saviour, and their heart-ſatisfaction with that device of ſaving ſinners by him, and having the image of God reſtored by him in them; yet their heart is not right with God, and they do content themſelves with an empty title, of being in a ſealed covenant with God, John viii. 39. Abraham is our father, ſay they. For although the Lord obligeth every man, who profeſſeth his ſatisfaction with Chriſt Jeſus, the deviſed ranſom to be cordial and ſincere herein; and only to theſe who are ſo, doth he make out the ſpiritual promiſes of the covenant, they only being 'privileged to be the ſons of God, who 'do really receive Chriſt,' John i. 12. yet the Lord doth permit many to profeſs their cloſing with him in Chriſt, both in the old and new teſtament, whilſt their heart is not engaged; and he doth admit them to be members of his church, granting unto them the uſe of ordinances, and many other external mercies and privileges denied unto the heathen, who are not in covenant with him.

V. Although the great part of the people do fooliſhly fancy, that they have cloſed with God in Chriſt Jeſus ſincerely and heartily, or at leaſt they do without any ground or warrant, promiſe a new heart to themſelves before they depart this life, yet there be but very few who do really and cordially cloſe with God in Chriſt Jeſus as he is offered in the goſpel; and ſo there be but very few ſaved as is clear, Matt.

vii. 14. 'Strait is the gate, and narrow is the 'way which leadeth unto life, and few there 'be who find it.' Mat. xx. 16. 'Many are cal-'led but few are chosen.' If people would believe this, it might help to alarm them.

VI. Although none at all do cordially close with God in Christ Jesus, and acquiesce in that ransom found out by God, exceptonly such as are elected, Rom. xi. 7. 'But the election hath 'obtained it, and the rest were blinded,' and whose hearts the Lord doth sovereignly determine to that blessed choice, John vi. 44. 'No 'man can come to me, except the Father which 'hath sent me, draw him;' yet the Lord hath left it as a duty upon people who hear this gospel, to close with his offer of salvation through Christ Jesus, as if it were in their power to do it: and the Lord, through these commands and exhortations, wherein he obligeth men to the thing, doth convey life and strength to the elect, and doth therein convey the new heart unto them, whichpointeth kindly towards this new device of saving sinners, and towards Christ in his covenant-relations; or, it is the Lord's mind in these commands and invitations, to put people on some duty, with which he useth to concur for accomplishing that business between him and them: So then, it is a coming on our part, and yet a drawing on his part, John vi. 44. it is a drawing on his part, and a running on our part, Cant. i. 4. it is an approaching on our part, and yet a choosing and causing to approach on his part, Psal. lxv. 4. It is a believ-

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ing, or receiving on our part, John i. 12. and yet it is given us to believe, Phil. i. 29.

CHAP. II.

What it is to cloſe with God's device of ſaving ſinners by Chriſt Jeſus, and that it is a neceſſary duty.

HAving premiſed theſe things, I ſay, if men miſs in themſelves the marks of a ſaving intereſt in Chriſt, ſpoken of in the former part of this treatiſe; then for ſecuring their ſtate, they are obliged with all diligence perſonally and heartily to accept of, and cloſe with God's device of ſaving ſinners by Chriſt Jeſus, held out in the goſpel.

In handling of this, we ſhall, 1ſt, Shew what it is to accept of, and cloſe with that noble invention. 2dly, We ſhall ſhew that it is the neceſſary duty of thoſe who would be in favour with God, and ſecure their ſouls. 3dly, What is previouſly required of thoſe who perform this duty, 4thly, What are the qualifications and properties of this duty, if rightly managed. 5thly, What be the native conſequences of it, if it be performed aright.

I. As for the firſt, what it is to cloſe with God's device of ſaving ſinners by Chriſt Jeſus, held out in the goſpel: here we muſt remember, as we ſhewed before, That at firſt God willed man to abide in his favour, by holding faſt his firſt integrity in which he was created; but man by his tranſgreſſion loſt God's favour, made

void that covenant of works, and put himself in an utter incapacity to regainthe Lord's friendship which he had lost by his sin, and to rescue himself from the curse and wrath now due to him for the same, or any way to procure his own salvation: but the Lord freely hath manifested another way of repairing man's lost estate, viz. by sending his Son Christ Jesus in the flesh, to satisfy his justice for the sins of the elect, and to restore in them his image now defaced, and to bring them unto glory; and he hath made open proclamation in the church that whosoever will lay aside all thoughts of saving themselves by the covenant of works, or inherent righteousness, and will agree heartily to be saved by Christ Jesus, they shall be restored to a better condition than formerly man was in, and shall be saved. So then, to close with God's device of saving sinners by Christ Jesus, is, to quit and forego all thoughts of help or salvation by our own righteousness, and to agree unto this way which God hath found out; it is to value and highly esteem of Christ Jesus, as the treasure sufficient to enrich poor man, and with the heart to believe this record, That there is life enough in him for men; it is to please this invention and to acquiesce in it, as the only way to true happiness; it is to point towards this Mediator, as God holdeth him out in the gospel, with desire to lay the stress of our whole state on him. This is that which is called faith or believing, the receiving of Christ, or believing on his name, John i. 12. This

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is that 'believing on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt,' commanded unto the Jaylor for his ſafety, Acts xvi. 31. This agreeth to all the deſcriptions of juſtifying faith in the ſcripture. This doth anſwer the type of 'looking to the braſen ſer-'pent lifted up in the wilderneſs,' John iii. 14, 15. And this is ſuppoſed in all theſe ordinary actings of faith, to which promiſes are annexed in the ſcripture: and will be found in all who have got the new heart from God, and it will be found in none elſe.

II. As to the ſecond thing, viz. That this is the neceſſary duty of all ſuch who would be in favour with God; and ſecure their ſouls. It appeareth thus:

I. This cloſing with God's device, or believing in Chriſt, is commanded every where in ſcripture by the Lord, as the condition of the new covenant, giving title and right unto all the ſpiritual bleſſings of the ſame; for it is, upon the matter, the receiving of Chriſt: this is commanded, whilſt God bids men 'come and buy,' that is, impropriate all by cloſing with that device, Iſa. lv. 1. The weary are commanded to come unto him thus, for their reſt, Matt. xi. 28. 'This is his commandment, that we ſhould 'believe on the name of his Son Jeſus Chriſt,' 1 John iii. 23. This is enough to prove it a duty incumbent: but further, it is ſuch a duty, as only giveth title and right to a ſonſhip; for, only they who receive him, are privileged to be ſons, John i. 12. 'But as many as received 'him, to them gave he power to become the

'sons of God, even to them that believe on his 'name.'

II. It appeareth to be the necessary duty of all, thus. No less than this doth give a meeting unto God, offering himself to be our God in Christ; and no less than this doth answer our profession, as we are in covenant with him, as members of his visible church. The Lord offereth to be our God in Christ: if we do not close with the offer, laying aside all thoughts of other ways by which we may attain to happiness, we give no meeting to him. He saith, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well 'pleased; hear ye him,' Matt. xvii. 5. If we close not with the offer, we give no answer unto God. Moreover, we are all 'baptized in the 'name of the Lord Jesus Christ, for the remis-'sion of sins, Acts ii. 38. Now, unless we close with Christ, as said is, we falsify that profession; therefore since this is the thing which doth answer God's offer in the gospel, and maketh good our profession as members of his church, it is a necessary duty lying upon us.

III. Whatsoever a man doth else, if he do not thus close with God's device anent Christ Jesus, and do not receive him, it doth not avail, either as to the accepting of his person, or of his performances, or as to the saving of his soul. Men are accepted only in Christ the beloved, Eph. i. 6. Abel and his offering are accepted by faith, Heb. xi. 4. 'Without faith it is impos-'sible to please God,' Heb. ii. 6. 'And he 'that believeth not is condemned already, and

'ſhall not ſee life, but the wrath of God abid-'eth on him,' John iii. 18, 36. For want of this no external title doth avail: the 'children 'of the kingdom are caſt out' if this be wanting, Matt. viii. 10, 11, 12. The people of Iſrael are like other heathens, in regard of a graceleſs ſtate lying open to the wrath of God, Jer. ix. 25, 26. 'Behold the days come, ſaith 'the Lord, that I will puniſh all them which 'are circumciſed with the uncircumciſed; 'Egypt, and Judah, and Edom——for all theſe 'nations are uncircumciſed, and all the houſe 'of Iſrael are uncircumciſed in the heart.' If men do not believe that he who was ſlain at Jeruſalem, who was called Chriſt Jeſus, and witneſſed unto by the prophets, and declared to be the Son of God by many mighty works; I ſay, if men do not believe that he is the way, and cloſe not with him as the only way, they ſhall die in their ſins, John viii. 24. 'I ſaid there-'fore unto you, that ye ſhall die in your ſins; 'for if ye believe not that I am he, ye ſhall die 'in your ſins.'

We ſay then, it is a moſt neceſſary duty, thus to cloſe with Chriſt Jeſus, as the bleſſed relief appointed for ſinners. Every one who is come to years of underſtanding, and heareth this goſpel, is obliged to take to heart his own loſt condition, and God's gracious offer of peace and ſalvation through Chriſt Jeſus; and ſpeedily to flee from the wrath to come, by accepting and cloſing with this offer, heartily acquieſcing therein as a ſatisfying way for ſaving of poor

ſinners,

ſinners. And, that all may be the more encouraged to ſet about this duty, when they hear him praying them to be reconciled unto him, let them remember that peace and ſalvation is offered to the people in univerſal terms, to all without exception; 'If any man will,' he ſhall be welcome, Rev. xxii. 17. If any thirſt, although after that which will never profit, yet they ſhall be welcome here, on the condition foreſaid, Iſa. lv. 2, 3. All are 'commanded to believe,' 1 John iii. 13. 'This is his 'commandment, that we ſhould believe on the 'name of his Son Jeſus Chriſt.' The promiſes are to all who are externally called by the goſpel. God excludes none, if they do not exclude themſelves, Acts ii, 39. 'The promiſe is unto you, and to your children, and to all that 'are afar off, even as many as the Lord our 'God ſhall call.' So that if any have a mind for the thing, they may come forward, 'he will 'in no wiſe caſt them out,' John 6. 37. being 'able to ſave to the uttermoſt them who come 'to God through him,' Heb. vii. 25. And theſe who have long delayed to take this matter to heart, had now the more need to look to it, leſt what belongs to their peace he hid from their eyes. But all theſe words will not take effect with People, until 'God pour out 'his Spirit from on high,' Iſa. xxxii. 15. to cauſe men approach unto God in Chriſt; yet we muſt ſtill preſs men's duty upon them, and obteſt and charge them by the appearing of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and their reckoning to him

in that day, that they give the Lord no reſt, until he ſend out that 'ſpirit, which he will 'give to them that aſk it,' Luke xi. 13. and cauſe them know what belongs unto their peace, and bring them up to their duty.

CHAP III.

What is previouſly required of thoſe that would believe on Chriſt Jeſus.

WE come now to ſpeak of the third thing, viz. what is previouſly required of theſe who are to perform this duty. Men muſt not raſhly, inconſiderately, and ignorantly ruſh in upon this matter, ſaying, they pleaſe that device of ſaving ſinners by Chriſt, and will acquieſce and reſt on him for ſafety: often, men do deceive themſelves here, and do imagine that they have done the thing. We ſhall therefore hold out ſome things pre-required in a perſon who is to cloſe with Chriſt Jeſus; which altho' we offer not as poſitive qualifications, fitting a man for Chriſt that way,' Iſa. lv. 1. 'Come—without money, and without price;' yet they are ſuch things, as without them, a man cannot knowingly and cordially perform the duty of believing on Chriſt Jeſus.

Beſide the common principles which are to be ſuppoſed in thoſe who live under goſpel ordinances, as the knowledge that men have immortal ſouls; that ſoul and body will be united again at the laſt day; that there is a heaven and a hell, one of which will be the everlaſting lot of

of all men; that the Old and New Testament is the true word of God, and the rule of faith and manners; that every man is by nature void of the grace of God, and is an enemy unto God and an heir of condemnation; that reconciliation is only by the mediator Christ Jesus; that faith unites unto him, and is the condition of the new covenant; that holiness is the fruit of true faith, and is to be studied as that without which no man shall see God: I say, beside these things, the knowledge of which is necessary, it is required of him who would believe on Christ Jesus, 1st, That he take to heart his natural condition; and here he must know some things, and also be very serious about them: I say, he must know some things, as,

I. That as he was born a rebel and outlaw unto God; so he hath by many actual transgressions disobliged God, and ratified the forfeiture of his favour: yea, a man should know many particular instances of his rebellion on all hands, as that he is a liar, sabbath-breaker, blasphemer, or the like, as Paul speaketh very particularly of himself afterwards, 1 Tim. i. 13.

II. The man must know that the wrath of God denounced in scripture, is standing in force against those very sins whereof he is guilty, and so consequently he is the party undoubtedly against whom God, who cannot lie, hath denounced war. A man must know, that when the scripture saith, 'Cursed is he that offereth 'a corrupt thing unto God,' Mal. i 14. It speaketh

ſpeaketh againſt him for his ſuperficial ſervice performed unto God with the outward man, when his heart was far off. When the word ſaith, 'The Lord will not hold him guiltleſs 'that taketh his name in vain,' Exod. xx. 7. The man muſt know it ſpeaketh againſt himſelf, who hath often careleſly profaned that dreadful name, 'before which all knees ſhould 'bow,' Phil. ii. 10, And 'which his enemies 'do take in vain,' Pſal. cxxxix 20. When the word ſaith, 'Curſed is he that doth the work 'of the Lord negligently,' Jer. xlviii. 10. The man muſt know that it ſpeaks againſt himſelf, who hath irreverently, with much wandring of heart, and drowſineſs, heard the word preached; and without ſenſe, faith or underſtanding, hath often prayed before him. When the word ſaith, 'Wo be to him that giveth his neighbour 'drink, and putteth his bottle to him, to make 'him drunk alſo, that he may look on his na-'kedneſs,' Hab. ii. 15, 16. The man muſt know that it is ſpoken againſt himſelf, who hath gloried in making his neighbour drunk, and that dreadful wrath is determined by the Lord againſt him, according to that ſcripture. When the word ſaith, 'God will judge unclean perſons,' Heb. xiii. 4. And will cloſe them out of the new 'Jeruſalem, and they ſhall have their part in 'the lake which burneth with fire and brim-'ſtone,' Rev. xxi. 8. The man muſt know that the ſcripture ſpeaketh theſe very words againſt him, he being an unclean perſon; ſo that he is the perſon againſt whom the curſes of the law do directly ſtrike. III.

III. A man must know that he hath nothing of his own to procure his peace, and to set him free of the hazard under which he lieth; because 'all his righteousness is as an unclean 'thing,' Isa. lxiv. 6. His prayers, his other services done to God, his alms-deeds, &c. Are not pass-gilt before God, since they came not from a right principle in his heart, and were not performed in a right way, nor upon a right account, nor for a right end: 'His sacrifices 'have been an abomination unto God,' Prov. xxi. 27.

IV. He must know, that as he is void of all the saving graces of the spirit, as the true love of God, the true fear of his name, godly sorrow for sin, &c. So particularly, that he wants faith in Christ, who taketh burden for all them who believe on him. Until a man know this, he will still leave all his debt and burden without care or regard, any where else, before he bring it to the common cautioner.

Now not only must a man know these things, as I said before, but must also very seriously take them to heart, that is to say, he must be affected with these things, and be in sad earnest about them, as he useth to be in other cases, wherein he useth to be most serious; yea, he should be more in earnest here, than in other cases, because it is of greater concernment unto him. This seriousness produceth,

I. A taking of salvation to heart more than any thing else. Shall men be obliged to 'seek 'first the kingdom of God?' Matt. vi. 33. Is there

there but one thing neceſſary? Luke x. 42. Shall. Paul 'count all things loſs and dung' for this matter? Phil. iii. 8. 'Is a man a loſ-'er gaining all the world, if he loſe his ſoul?' Mark viii. 36. Shall this be the only ground of joy, 'that men's names are written in the book 'of life?' Luke x. 20 and ſhall not men, who would be reckoned ſerious, take their ſoul and ſalvation more to heart than any thing elſe? ſurely it cannot fail. Let none deceive themſelves. If the hazard of their ſoul, and the ſalvation thereof, and how to be in favour with God, hath not gone nearer to their heart than any thing in the world beſide, it cannot be preſumed upon juſt grounds, that they ever knew ſin, or God, or the everlaſtingneſs of his wrath aright.

II. This ſerioufneſs breaketh the man's heart, and fainteth the ſtoutneſs of it, and leadeth it out to ſorrow, 'as one doth for a firſt born,' Zech. xii. 10. I grant their ſorrow will better ſuit that ſcripture afterwards, when they apprehend Chriſt pierced by their ſins.

III. It leadeth the man to a ſelf-lothing; a man taking up himſelf ſo cannot but lothe himſelf for his abominations, whereby he hath deſtroyed himſelf. There is ſomewhat of that ſpirit of revenge, which is mentioned as a fruit of true repentance, 2 Cor. vii. 11. 'This ſelf-'ſame thing that ye ſorrowed after a godly ſort, 'what carefulneſs it wrought in you—yea, 'what revenge?'

IV. This ſeriouſneſs doth make the man

peremptory, to find relief; ſince it is not in himſelf, he dare not put off and delay his buſineſs, as before: and this is indeed required, that he find himſelf ſo purſued and put to it, that he flee for refuge ſomewhere. I grant ſome have a higher and ſome a leſſer degree of this ſeriouſneſs, as we ſhewed in the former part of this treatiſe: but if we ſpeak of the Lord's ordinary way of working with thoſe who are come to age, we ſay, They muſt very ſeriouſly take their ſoul's eſtate to heart, deſpairing of help in themſelves, ſince the whole 'need not a phyſician, but thoſe that are ſick,' Matth. ix. 12. As for the meaſure, We plead only that which probably doth ſuppoſe that a man will be induced thereby to tranſact cordially with Chriſt, on any terms he doth offer himſelf, to be cloſed with.

The ſecond thing pre-required of him who would believe on Chriſt Jeſus, is, He muſt know and take to heart the way to eſcape from God's wrath: the Spirit muſt convince him of that righteouſneſs. Here a man muſt underſtand ſomewhat diſtinctly, that God hath deviſed a way to ſave poor loſt man by Jeſus Chriſt, whoſe perfect righteouſneſs hath ſatisfied offended juſtice, and procured pardon and everlaſting favour to all thoſe whom he perſuadeth by this goſpel to accept of God's offer, Acts xiii. 38, 39. 'Be it known unto you therefore——that 'through this man is preached unto you the 'forgiveneſs of ſins; and by him all that be-'lieve are juſtified from all things.'—John i. 12.

12. 'As many as received him, to them gave 'he power to become the ſons of God, even 'to them that believe on his Name.' So that no perſon is excluded, of whatſoever rank or condition, whatſoever hath been his former way, unleſs he be guilty of the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, which is a malicious hatred and rejection of the remedy appointed for ſinners, as we ſhall hear; for all manner of ſin is forgiven unto thoſe who accept of the offer in God's way, Matth. xii. 31. 'He is able to ſave 'to the uttermoſt thoſe that come unto God 'through him.' Heb. vii. 25.

The third thing pre-required, is, a man muſt know, that as God hath not excluded him from the relief appointed, ſo he is willing to be reconciled unto men thro' Chriſt, and hath obliged men to cloſe with him through Chriſt Jeſus, and ſo to impropriate that ſalvation to themſelves. He not only invites all to come, Iſa. lv. 1, 2. and welcometh all that come, as we find in the goſpel, and commendeth thoſe who come, as the Centurion, Matt. viii. 10. and 'the woman of Canaan,' Matt. xv. 28. and chideth for not coming and cloſing with him, John v. 40. 'And ye will not come to me, that 'ye might have life;' and condemneth for not cloſing ſo with him, John iii. 18. 'He that 'believeth not is condemned already;' but alſo he commandeth all to believe on Chriſt, 1 John iii. 23. 'This is his commandment, that 'we ſhould believe on the name of his Son Je'ſus Chriſt.' So as a man is not to queſtion

the Lord's willingneſs to receive men who go to Chriſt honeſtly, for God hath abundantly cleared that in ſcripture. Unleſs that a man know ſo much, he will ſcarcely dare to lay his heart open for that noble device of ſaving ſinners, or adventure his own weight and ſtreſs upon Chriſt Jeſus.

The fourth thing pre required, is, the man who would cloſe with Chriſt Jeſus muſt reſolve to break all 'covenants with hell and death,' Iſa. xxviii. 15. Whatſoever known evil men are engaged into, they muſt reſolve to forgo it; for, 'there is no concord between Chriſt and 'Belial,' 2 Cor. vi. 14, 15, 16, 17, 18. The Lord requireth that they who would expect 'him to be for them, ſhould not be for ano-'ther,' Hoſ. iii. 3. This is far from evangelic repentance, which I grant doth not preceed a man's cloſing with Chriſt by faith: there is little here beyond a miſregard of theſe things unto which a man was formerly devoted, and a ſlighting what he was made upon, becauſe he ſeeth himſelf deſtroyed thereby, and relief now offered; whereupon his heart beginneth to be more intent than formerly it was. After this when Chriſt is lookt upon alone, his worth and beauty doth appear, ſo as among all the gods there is none like unto him, and he looketh out as a ſufficient covering of the eyes to all who get him: upon which the heart loveth God's device in the new covenant, and loveth to lay its weight upon Chriſt rather than any other

other way, bending towards him; and ſo the man becometh a believer.

Now, I will not ſay that all theſe things whereof we have ſpoken, are formally, orderly and diſtinctly found in every perſon before he cloſe with God in Chriſt; for, the way of the heart with Chriſt may be added to 'the four 'wonderful things,' Prov. xxx. 18, 19. It is hard to trace the heart in its tranſlation from darkneſs to light; yet we hold out the moſt ordinary and likely way, to him who doth aſk the way; debarring thereby ignorant and ſenſeleſs perſons from meddling, and diſcharging them to pretend to an intereſt in him whilſt they remain ſuch.

CHAP. IV.

The properties and native conſequences of true believing.

THE fourth thing we propoſed to ſpeak to, is, The properties of this duty, when rightly gone about. I ſhall only hint a few:

I. Believing on Chriſt muſt be perſonal: a man himſelf and in his own proper perſon muſt cloſe with Chriſt Jeſus; 'the juſt ſhall live by 'faith,' Hab. ii. 4. This faith, that it will not ſuffice for a man's ſafety and relief, that he is in covenant with God, as a born member of the viſible church, by virtue of the parents ſubjection to God's ordinances: neither will it ſuffice, that the perſon had the initiating ſeal of baptiſm added, and that he then

virtually engaged to seek salvation by Christ's blood, as all infants do: neither doth it suffice, that men are come of believing parents; their faith will not instate their children into a right to the spiritual blessings of the covenant; neither will it suffice, that parents did in some respect engage for their children, and give them away unto God: all these things do not avail. The children of the kingdom and of godly predecessors are cast out; unless a man in his own person, put out faith in Christ Jesus, and with his own heart, please and acquiesce in that device of saving sinners, he cannot be saved. I grant this faith is given unto him by Christ, but certain it is, that it must be personal.

II. This duty must be cordial and hearty; 'With the heart man believeth unto righteousness,' Rom. x. 10. A man must be sincere and without guile, in closing with Christ, judging him the only covering of the eyes, not hankering after another way. The matter must not swim only in the head or understanding, but it must be in the heart; the man not only must be persuaded that Christ is the way, but affectionately persuaded of it, loving and liking the thing, having complacency in it; so that 'it is all a man's desire,' as David speaketh of the covenant, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. If a man be cordial and affectionate in any thing, surely he must be so here in this one thing that is necessary. It must not be simply a fancy in the head, it must be a heart-business, and soul-business; yea, not a business in the outer

court

court of affections, but in the flower of affections, and in the innermoſt cabinet of the ſoul, where Chriſt is formed. Shall a man be cordial in any thing, and not in this, which doth comprize all his chief intereſts, and his everlaſting ſtate within it? 'Shall the Lord' be ſaid to 'rejoice over a man, as a bridegroom 'rejoiceth over his bride?' Iſa. lxii. 5. and to 'reſt in his love with joy?' Zeph. iii. 17. and ſhall not the heart of man go out and meet him here? The heart or nothing; love or nothing; marriage-love, which goeth from heart to heart; love of eſpouſals, or nothing, Prov. xxiii. 26. 'My ſon, give me thine heart.' 1 Cor. xiii. 2, 3. 'Tho' I beſtow all my goods to feed 'the poor, and tho' I give my body to be 'burned, and have not Charity, it profiteth me 'nothing.' I will not ſay, that there is all in all, aſſoon as they believe, a prevailing ſenſible love, which maketh ſick; but there muſt be in believing, a rational and kindly love, ſo well grounded, and deeply engaging, that 'many 'waters cannot quench it. It is ſtrong as 'death, and jealouſy in it burneth as fire,' Cant. viii. 6, 7.

The third property or qualification of believing, as it goeth out after Chriſt, is, It muſt be rational. Hereby I mean, that the man ſhould move towards God in Chriſt, in knowledge and underſtanding, taking up God's device of ſaving ſinners by Chriſt, as the ſcripture doth hold it out, not fancying a Chriſt to himſelf, otherwiſe than the goſpel ſpeaketh of

him,

him, nor another way of relief by him than the word of God holdeth out. Therefore we find knowledge joined to the covenant between God and man as a requiſite, Jer. xxiv. 7. 'And I 'will give them an heart to know me, that I 'am the Lord; and they ſhall be my people, 'and I will be their God.' Jer.xxxi. 3,4. 'And 'they ſhall teach no more every man his neigh-'bour, and every man his brother, ſaying, 'Know the Lord; for they ſhall all know me, 'from the leaſt of them to the greateſt of them, 'ſaith the Lord.' I mean here alſo, that a man be in calmneſs of ſpirit, and as it were, in his cold blood in cloſing with Chriſt Jeſus, not in a ſimple fit of affection, which ſoon evaniſheth, Matth. xiii. 20. 'He that received 'the ſeed into ſtony places, the ſame is he that 'heareth the word, and anon with joy receiv-'eth it.' Nor in a diſtemper thro' ſome outward diſtreſs, as the people were, Pſal. lxxviii. 34. 'When he ſlew them, then they ſought 'him'——and proved 'not ſtedfaſt in his co-'venant.' Nor under a temptation of ſome outward temporary intereſt, as Simon Magus was when he believed, Acts viii. A man muſt act here rationally, as being maſter of himſelf, in ſome meaſure able to judge of the good or evil of the thing as it ſtands before him.

The fourth is, faith: as it goeth out rationally, ſo it goeth out reſolutely. The poor diſtreſt people in the goſpel did moſt reſolutely caſt themſelves upon Chriſt. This reſoluteneſs of ſpirit, is in order to all difficulties that

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ly in the way; violence is offered to theſe. The man whoſe heart is a ſhaping out for Chriſt Jeſus, cannot ſay, 'There is a lion in 'the ſtreet,' Prov. xxvi. 13. If he cannot have acceſs by the door, he will break thro' the roof of the houſe, with that man, Luke v. 19. He often doth not regard that which the world calleth Diſcretion or Prudence, like Zaccheus climbing up on a tree to ſee Chriſt, when faith was breeding in his boſom, Luke xix. This reſoluteneſs of ſpirit looketh towards what inconveniences may follow, and waveth all theſe; at leaſt reſolving over all theſe, like a 'wiſe builder who reckoneth the expence 'before hand,' Luke xiv. 28. This reſoluteneſs is alſo in order to all a man's idols, and ſuch weights as would eaſily beſet him, if he did not bend after Chriſt over them all, like that blind man who did caſt his garment from him, when Chriſt called him, Mark x. 50. This reſoluteneſs in the ſoul, proceedeth from deſperate ſelf-neceſſity within the man, as it was with the Jaylor, Acts xvi. 30. and from the ſovereign command of God, obliging the man to move towards Chriſt, 1 John iii. 23. 'This is his commandment, that we ſhould 'believe on the name of his ſon Jeſus Chriſt,' and from the good report gone abroad of God, that 'he putteth none away that come unto 'him through Chriſt,' John vi. 37. but doth commend ſuch as do adventure over the greateſt difficulties, as the woman of Canaan, Matth. xv. 28. But above all, this reſoluteneſs doth

proceed

proceed from the arm of Jehovah, ſecretly and ſtrongly drawing the ſinner towards Chriſt, John vi. 44. 'No man can come to me, except 'the Father, which hath ſent me, draw him.'

I will not ſay, that every one, cloſing with Chriſt in the offers of the goſpel, hath all the foreſaid thoughts formally in his mind; yet, upon ſearch it will be found, if he be put to it, or put in mind of theſe things, they are then aloft in the ſoul.

By what is ſaid, it doth manifeſtly appear, that many in the viſible church had need to do ſomewhat further, for ſecuring of their ſoul, when they come to years of diſcretion, than is found to have been done by them before, in the covenant between God and the church, ſealed to them in baptiſm.

By what is ſaid alſo, there is a competent guard upon the free grace of God in the goſpel, held out thro' Chriſt Jeſus; ſo as ignorant ſenſeleſs profane men cannot, with any ſhadow of reaſon, pretend to an intereſt in it. It is true, believing in Chriſt, and cloſing with him as a perfect Saviour, ſeemeth eaſy, and every godleſs man ſaith that he believeth on him: but they deceive themſelves, ſince their ſoul hath never cordially, rationally, and reſolutely gone out after Chriſt Jeſus, as we have ſaid. It may be, ſome wicked men have been enlightened, Heb. vi. 4. and have found ſome reel in their fear, 'Felix trembled,' Acts xxiv. 25. or in their joy, 'He that received the ſeed 'into ſtony places, the ſame is he that hear-

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'eth the word, and anon with joy, receiveth it,' Mat. xiii. 20. and Herod heard John gladly, Mark vi. 20. But not having engaged their heart in approaching to God, Jer. 30. 21. having either ſitten down in that common work, as their ſanctuary, until the trial came, Mat. xiii. 20, 21. 'When tribulation or perſecution a-'riſeth becauſe of the word, by and by he is 'offended; or they return back with the dog 'totheir vomit,fromwhich theyhad inſome mea-'ſure eſcaped by the knowledge of the Lord 'and Saviour, 2 Pet. ii. 20, 21, 22. or they utterly fall away to the hatred and malicious deſpiſing and perſecuting of Chriſt and his intereſts; 'from whence hardly can they be re-'covered,' Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6. and x. 26, 29. Which things ſhould provoke men to be ſerious in this great buſineſs.

We come now to ſpeak to the fifth thing propoſed, and that is, What be the native conſequences of true believing. I ſhall reduce what I will ſpeak of them to theſe two, viz. Union with God and communion. Firſt then, I ſay, when a ſinner cloſeth with Chriſt Jeſus, as ſaid is, there is preſently an admirable union, a ſtrange oneneſs between God and the man, as the huſband and wife, head and body, root and branches, are not to be reckoned two but one; ſo Chriſt, or God in Chriſt, and the ſinner cloſing with him by faith are one; 'We are mem-'bers of his body, of his fleſh, and of his bones,' &c. Eph. v. 30, 31, 32. 'He that is ſojoined un-'to the Lord, is one Spirit, 1 Cor. vi. 7. 'As

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'the Father is in the Son, and Christ in the 'Father; so believers are one in the Father 'and the Son; they are one as the Father and 'the Son are one. The Father in Christ, and 'Christ in believers, that they may be made 'perfect in one, John xvii. 21, 22, 23, 26.

O what a strange interweaving, and indissoluble knot there!

Because of this union betwixt God and the believer, I. They can never hate one another, henceforth the Lord will never hate the believer. 'As no man hateth his own Flesh at any 'time, but cherisheth and nourisheth it,' so doth Christ his people, Eph. v. 29. He may be angry, so as to correct and chastise the man that is a believer; but all he doth to him, is for his good and advantage. 'All the Lord's 'paths must be mercy and truth to him,' Psal. xxv. 10. 'All things must work together for 'good to him,' Rom. viii. 28. On the other side the believer can never hate God maliciously; for, 'He that is born of God sinneth not,' 1 John iii. 9. For the Lord hath resolved and ordained things so, that his hand shall undoubtedly, so be upon all believers for good, that they shall never get leave to hate him, and be so pluckt out of his hand.

II. Because of this union, there is a strange sympathy and fellow-feelling between God and the believer. 'The Lord is afflicted with the 'man's affliction, Isa. lxiii. 9. He doth tenderly, carefully and seasonably resent it, as if he 'were afflicted with it. He who toucheth the

believer

'believer, toucheth the apple of the Lord's eye' Zech. ii. 8. 'He is touched with the feeling of 'their infirmities,' Heb. iv. 15. 'and precious 'in his ſight is their blood,' Pſal. cxvi. 15. In a word, what is done to them, is done unto him; and what is not done unto them, is not done unto him, Matt. x. 40. 'He that receiv-'eth you, receiveth me.' Matt. xxv. 40, 45. 'In as much as ye have done it to one of the 'leaſt of theſe my brethren, ye have done it 'unto me. In as much as ye did it not to one 'of the leaſt of theſe ye did it not to me.' On the other part, the zeal of his houſe ſitteth in the heart of the believer, Pſal. lxix. 9. The Lord's reproach lighteth on the believer. If it go well with his affairs, that is the buſineſs of his people. So there is a ſtrange ſympathy between God and believers, all by virtue of the union between them; becauſe of which, men ſhould hate every thing which would compete with him in their love or affections, and ſhould diſdain to be ſlaves to the creatures, ſince theſe are the ſervants of their Lord and huſband, and their ſervants through him. What a hateful thing for a queen to whore with the ſervants of her prince and huſband? It is alſo a ſhame for a believer to be afraid of evil tidings, ſince the Lord with whom he is one, alone ruleth all things, 'and doth whatſoever pleaſeth him in 'heaven and earth, 1 Cor. iii. 21, 23. 'All 'things are yours, and ye are Chriſt's, and 'Chriſt is God's, Pſal. cxii. 6, 7. 'Surely he 'ſhall not be moved for ever, he ſhall not be a-

'fraid of evil tidings; his heart is fixed trusting upon the Lord, his heart is established, he 'shall not be afraid.' Psal. cxv. 3. 'Our God 'is in the heavens, he hath done whatsoever he 'pleased.'

Secondly, The other great consequence of believing is an admirable unparallell'd communion; by virtue whereof, I. The parties themselves do belong each to other. The Lord is the God of his people, he himself, Father, Son and holy Ghost, is their God, in all his glorious Attributes, his Justice as well as his Mercy, his Wisdom, power, holiness, &c. for he becometh the God of his people, as he often speaketh in the covenant. On the other part, the believers are his people. In their very persons they are his, as the covenant doth speak: they shall be his people, their head, their heart, their hand, &c. whatsoever they are, they are his.

II. by virtue of this communion, they have a mutual interest in one anothers whole goods and gear, in as far as can be useful. All the Lord's word doth belong to the believer. Threatnings as well as promises, for their good; all his ways, all his works of all sorts, special communications, death, devils, even all things in so far as can be useful. 1 Cor. iii. 21, 22, 23. 'All things are yours; whether Paul, or Apol-'los, or Cephas, or the world or life, or death, 'or things present, or things to come, all are 'yours; and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's.' On the other side, all which belongeth to the believer is the Lords; heritage, children, life, wife,

wife, credit, &c. all is at his disposing; if any of these can be useful to him, the believer is to forgo them, else he falsifieth that communion anddeclareth himself in so far unworthy of Christ. Luke xiv. 26. 'If any man come to me, and 'hate not his father----yea, and his life also, 'he cannot be my disciple.

III. By virtue of this communion there should be much homelineſs and familiarity between God and the believer. The Lord may meddle with any thing which doth belong to the believer, and do unto him what seemeth good to him; and the man is not to mistake, or say unto God what dost thou? except in so far as concerneth his duty; yea, he is still to say in every case, good is the word and will of the Lord, Isa. xxxix. 8. 2 Kings iv. 23, 26. On the other part, the believer may in an humble way, be homely and familar with God in Christ; 'he may come with boldneſs to the throne of 'grace,' and not use a number of compliments in his addresses unto God, Heb. vi. 16. for he is no more a stranger unto God, Eph. ii. 19. so that he needs not speak unto God, as one who hath acquaintance to make every hour, as many professors do: and it maketh a huge inconsistency in their religion.

The believer also may lay open all his heart unto God, 1 Sam. i. 15. 'I have poured out 'my soul before the Lord,' and impart all his secrets unto him, and all his temptations without fear of a mistake. The believer also may enquire into what God doth in so far as may

concern his own duty, or in so far as may ward of mistakes of the Lord's way, and reconcile it with his word; so Job xiii. 15. 'Though 'he slay me, yet will I trust in him; but I 'will maintain mine own ways before him.' The believer is a friend in this respect, as knowing what the Master doth. See Gen. xviii. 23. &c. Jer. xii. 1. Isa. lxiii. 17.

The believer also may be homely with God, to go in daily with his failings, and seek repentance, pardon, and peace thro' Christ's advocateship, Acts v. 31. 'Him hath God exalted 'with his right-hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance unto Israel, and 'forgiveness of sins.' John ii. 1. 'If any man 'sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, 'Jesus Christ the righteous.' O how often in one day may the believer plead pardon, if he intend not to mock God, or turn grace into wantonness! The Lord hath commanded men to 'forgive seventy times seven times in one day,' and hath hinted there in the parable of a king who took account of his servants, how much more the master will forgive, Mat. xviii. 22.---28.

The believer also may be homely, to intrust God with all his outward concernments, for he doth care for these things, Matt. vi. 30, 31, 32. 'If God so clothe the grass of the field---'shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of 'little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying what shall we eat? or what shall we drink? 'or wherewith shall we be clothed? For your

'heavenly

'heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of 'all theſe things,' 1 Pet. v. 7. 'Caſting all your 'care upon him, for he careth for you.' Yea, the believer may humbly put God to it, to make him forthcoming for him, in all caſes, as beſeemeth, and to help him to ſuitable fruit in every ſeaſon, even grace in time of need, Heb. iv. 16. Yea, how great things may believers ſeek from him in Chriſt Jeſus, both for themſelves and others, 1 John v. 14, 15. 'If we aſk 'any thing according to his will, he heareth 'us.' John xiv. 13. 'Whatſoever ye ſhall ask 'in my name, that will I do.' Iſa. xlv. 11. 'Ask me of things to come concerning my 'Sons, concerning the work of my hands, com-'mand ye me.' It is the ſhame and great prejudice of his people, that they do not improve that communion with God more than they do: Chriſt may juſtly upbraid them, 'that they aſk 'nothing in his name,' John xvi. 24.

By what is ſaid, it doth appear, of how great conſequence this duty of believing is, by which a man cloſeth with Chriſt Jeſus, whom the Father hath ſealed, and given for the covenant to the people. It is ſo honourable for God, anſwering his very deſign, and ſerving his intereſt in the whole contrivement and manifeſtation of the goſpel; and it is ſo advantageous to men, that Satan and an evil heart of unbelief do mightily oppoſe it, by moving objections againſt it. I ſhall hint ſome moſt ordinary.

CHAP V.

Objections, taken from a man's unworthiness, and the heinousness of his sin, answered.

Object. I Am so base, worthless, and feckless of myself, that I think it were high presumption for me to meddle with Christ Jesus, or the Salvation purchased at the rate of his blood.

Answ. It is true all the children of Adam are base and naughty before him, 'who chargeth 'his angels with folly, Job iv. 18. 'All na-'tions are less than nothing, and vanity before 'him,' Isa. xl. 17. There is such a disproportion between God and men, that unless he himself had devised that covenant, and of his own free-will had offered so to transact with men, it had been high treason for men or angels to have imagined, that God should have humbled himself, and become a servant, and have taken on our nature, and have united it by a personal union to the blessed Godhead; and that he should have subjected himself to the shameful death of the cross; and all this, that men, who were rebels, should be reconciled unto God, and be made eternally happy, by being in his holy company for ever.

But I say, all that was his own device and free choice: Yea, moreover, if God had not sovereignly commanded me so to close with him in and through Christ, Isa. lv. 1, 2, 3. Matt. xi.

xi. 28. 1 John iii. 23. 2 Cor. v. 20. no man durst have made use of that device of his. So then, altho' with Abigail I may say, 'Let 'me be but a servant, to wash the feet of the 'servants of my Lord,' 1 Sam. xxv. 41. yet since he hath in his holy wisdom devised that way, and knoweth how to be richly glorified in it, Eph. i. 18 'The eyes of your understand-'ing being enlightened, that ye may know— 'what is the riches of the glory of his inheri-'tance in the saints.' John xvii. 10. "All 'mine are thine, and thine are mine, and I am 'glorified in them.' And he hath commanded me, as I shall be answerable in the great day, to close with him in Christ, as said is, I dare not disobey, nor enquire into the reasons of his contrivements and commands, but must adventure on the business, as I would not be found to 'frustrate the grace of God,' Gal. ii. 21. and in a manner disappoint the gospel, and falsify the 'Record which God hath born of his Son, 'that there is life enough in him for men,' 1 John v. 10, 11. and so 'make God a liar,' and add that rebellion to all my former transgressions.

Object. I am a person singularly sinful, beyond any I know; therefore I dare not presume to go near unto Christ Jesus, or look after that salvation which is through his righteousness.

Ans. Is your sin beyond the drunkenness and incest of Lot; adultery covered with murder in David; idolatry, and horrid apostasy in Solo-

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mon; idolatry, murder and witchcraft in Manasseh; anger against God, and his way, in Jonah; for-swearing of Christ in Peter, after he was forewarned, and had vowed the contrary; bloody persecution in Paul, making the saints to blaspheme, &c.? (but wo to him who is emboldened to sin by these instances recorded in scripture, and adduced here, to the commendation to the free and rich grace of God, and to encourage poor penitent sinners to flee unto Christ) I say, are your sins beyond these? Yet all these obtained pardon thro' Christ, as the scripture doth shew.

Know therefore, that all sins do ly alike level before the free Grace of God, 'who loveth 'freely, Hos. xiv. 4. And looketh not to less or more sin. If the person have a heart to 'come 'unto him, through Christ, then he is able to 'save to the utmost,' Heb. vii. 25. Yea, it is more provoking before God, not to close with Christ when the offer cometh to a man, than all the rest of his transgressions are: for 'he that 'believeth not, hath made God a liar, in that 'record he hath born of life in the son,' 1 John v. 10, 11. 'And he who doth not believe, shall 'be condemned for not believing on the Son of 'God,' John iii. 18. That shall be the main thing in his dittay; so that much sin cannot excuse a man, if he scare at Christ, and shift his offer, since God hath openly declared, that this is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, 'Christ came to save sinners, whereof I am chief.' even he who is chief of sinners in his own apprehension

prehensions, is bound to believe and 'accept 'this saying,' 1 Tim. i. 15.

Object. My sins have some aggravating circumstances beyond the same sins in other persons, which doth much terrify me.

Answ. What can the aggravations of thy sins be, which are not parallelled in the forecited examples? is thy sin against great light? so behoved many of these we spake of before. Was it against singular mercies and deliverances? so wat that of Lot's and Noah's drunkenness. Was thy sin done with much deliberation? so was David's whilst he wrote the letter against Uriah. Was it against, or after any singular manifestation of God? so was Solomon's. Was it by a small anddespicable temptation? sowas that of Jonah, and of Peter, if we consider the heinousness of their transgression. Hast thou reiterated the sin and committed it over again? so did Lot, so did Peter, so did Jehoshaphat in joining with Ahab and Jehoram, 1 Kings xxii. 2. 2 Kings iii. Are there many gross sins concurring together in thee? so were there in Manasseh. Hast thou stood out in rebellion? (that, as the former, is thy shame: but) so did the 'Thief on the 'cross;' he stood it out to the last gasp, Luke xxiii. 42. 43. If yet 'thou hast an ear to hear,' thou are commanded to hear, Matt. xiii. 9. Altho' thou hast long 'spent thy money for that which 'is not bread,' Isa. lv. 1, 2. Thou hast the greater need now to make haste, and to flee for refuge, and if thou do so, he shall welcome thee, and 'in no wise cast thee out,' John vi. 37. Especially

ſpecially, ſince he hath uſed no preſcription of time in ſcripture. So that all thoſe aggravations of thy ſin will not excuſe the ſhifting of the Lord's offer.

Object. In all theſe inſtances given, you have not named the particulars whereof I am guilty; nor know I any who ever obtained mercy before God, being guilty of ſuch things as are in me.

Anſw. It is hard to condeſcend upon every particular tranſgreſſion which may vex the conſcience; yea, leſſer ſins than ſome of theſe I have mentioned, may hugely diſquiet, if the Lord blow the fire. But, for thy ſatisfaction I ſhall condeſcend upon ſome truths of ſcripture, which do reach ſins and caſes more univerſally, than any man can do particularly. See Exod. xxxiv. 7. 'God pardoneth iniquity, tranſgreſſion and 'ſin,' that is, all manner of ſin. Ezek. xviii. 21, 22, 30. 'If a man turn from all his wicked-'neſs, it ſhall no more be remembered, or prove 'his ruin.' John vi. 37 'Him that cometh, 'he will in no wiſe caſt out.' That is whatſoever be his ſins, or the aggravations of them. John iii. 16. 'Whoſoever believeth ſhall have 'everlaſting life,' that is, without exception of any ſin, or any caſe. Heb. vii. 25. 'He is able to 'ſave to the utmoſt theſe who come to God 'through him.' No man can ſufficiently declare what is God's uttermoſt. Matt. xii. 31. 'All 'manner of ſin and blaſphemy ſhall be forgiven 'unto men,' that is, there is no ſort of ſin, whereof one inſtance ſhall not be forgiven in one

one person or other, 'except the sin against the 'Holy Ghost.' These and the like scriptures, do carry all sorts of sin before them; so that, let thy sins be what they will, or can be, they may be sunk in one of these truths, so as thy sin can be no excuse to thee for shifting the offer of peace and salvation through Christ, since 'any 'man who will,' is allowed to 'come and take,' Rev. xxii. 17.

We will not multiply words: the great God of heaven and earth hath sovereignly commanded all who see their need of relief, to betake themselves unto Christ Jesus, and to close cordially with God's device of saving sinners by him, laying aside all objections and excuses, as they shall be answerable unto him in the day he shall judge the quick and the dead, and shall drive away out of his presence all these who would dare to say, their sins and condition were such as that they durst not adventure upon Christ's perfect righteousness for their relief, notwithstanding of the Lord's own command often interposed, and in a manner his credit engaged.

CHAP. VI.

Of the sin against the Holy Ghost.

Object. I Suspect I am guilty of the sin against the Holy Ghost, and so am incapable of pardon; and therefore I need not think of believing on Christ Jesus for saving of my soul.

Answ. Altho' none should charge this sin on themselves,

themselves, or on others unless they can prove and instruct the charge according to Christ's example, Matt. xi. 5, 26, 32. Yet for satisfying of the doubt, I shall, 1. shew what is not the sin against the Holy Ghost, properly so called, because there be some gross sins which people do unwarrantably judge to be this unpardonable sin. 2. I shall shew what is the sin against the Holy Ghost. 3. I shall draw some conclusions in answer directly to the objection.

As for the first, there be many gross sins, which altho' as all other sins, they may be sins against the Holy Ghost, who is God equal and one with the Father and the Son, and are done against some of his operations and motions, yet are they not 'the sin against the Holy Ghost,' which is the unpardonable sin. As, 1, blaspheming of God under bodily totures, is not that sin; for some saints fell into this, Acts xxvi, 11. 'And I punished them oft in every synagogue, 'and compelled them to blaspheme;' much less blaspheming of God in a fit of distraction, or frenzy; for a man is not a free rational agent at that time: and 'he that spareth his people, 'as a father doth the son that serveth him,' Mal. iii. 17. 'and pitieth them that fear him, 'as a father pitieth his children,' Psal. ciii. 13. So doth he spare and pity in these rovings; for so would our fathers according to the flesh do, if we blasphemed them in a fit of distraction, much less are horrid blasphemies against God, darted in upon the soul, and not allowed there, this unpardonable sin; for such things were offered

offered to Chriſt, Matt. iv. And are often caſt in upon the ſaints.

II. The hating of good in others, whilſt I am not convinced that it is good, but in my light do judge it to be evil; yea, the ſpeaking againſt it, yea, the perſecuting of it in that caſe, is not the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt; for all theſe will be found in Paul before he was converted; and he obtained mercy, becauſe he did theſe things ignorantly.

III. Heart-riſing at the thriving of others in the work and way of God, whilſt I love it in myſelf; yea, the riſing of heart againſt providence, which often expreſſeth itſelf againſt the creatures neareſt our hand; yea, this riſing of heart entertained and maintained, (although they be horrid things leading towards that unpardonable ſin, yet) are not that ſin; for theſe may be in the ſaints, proceeding from ſelf-love, which cannot endure to be darkned by another, and proceeding from ſome croſs in their idol under a fit of temptation; the moſt part of all this was in Jonah, chap. iv,

IV. Not only are not decays in what once was in the man, and falling into groſs ſins againſt light, after the receiving of the truth, this unpardonable ſin; for then many of the ſaints in ſcripture were undone: but further, apoſtacy from much of the truth, is not that ſin; for that was in Solomon, and in the church of Corinth and Galatia; yea, denying, yea, forſwearing of the moſt fundamental truth under a

great temptation, is not this ſin; for then Peter had been undone.

V. As reſiſting, quenching, grieving and vexing of the Spirit of God by many ſinful ways, are not this unpardonable ſin; for they are charged with theſe, who are called to repentance in ſcripture, and not ſhut out as guilty of this ſin: ſo neither reiterating ſin againſt light, is the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, altho' it leadeth towards it; for ſuch was Peter's ſin in denying Chriſt; ſo was Jehoſhaphat's ſin in joining with Ahab and Jehoram.

VI. Purpoſes and eſſays of ſelf-murder, and even purpoſes of murdering godly men, the party being under a ſad fit of temptation; yea, actual ſelf-murder, (although probably it often joineth in the iſſue with this unpardonable ſin, which ought to make every ſoul look upon the very temptation to it with horror and abhorrency, yet) is not the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt. The Jaylor intended to kill himſelf, upon a worſe account than many poor people do, in the ſight and ſenſe of God's wrath, and of their own ſin and corruption; yet that Jaylor obtained pardon. Acts xvi. 27, 34. And Paul, before his effectual calling, was acceſſary unto the murder of many ſaints, and intended to kill more, as himſelf granteth, Acts xxvi. and 9, 10, 11, 12.

Altho' all theſe are dreadful ſins, each of them deſerving wrath everlaſting, and not being repented of, bring endleſs vengeance; eſpecially the laſt cuts off hope of relief, for ought can be expected in an ordinary way; yet none of theſe,

is

the unpardonable ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt: and ſo under any of theſe, there is hope to him that hath an ear to hear the joyful ſound of the covenant. All manner of ſuch ſin and blaſphemy may be forgiven, as is clear in the ſcripture, where theſe things are mentioned.

As for the ſecond thing. Let us ſee what the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt is. It is not a ſimple act of tranſgreſſion, but a complex of many miſchievous things, involving ſoul and body ordinarily in guilt. We thus deſcribe it: 'It is a rejecting and oppoſing of the chief 'goſpel-truth, and way of ſalvation, made out 'ſingularly to a man by the Spirit of God, in 'the truth and good thereof; and that avowedly, 'freely, wilfully, maliciouſly and deſpitefully, 'breeding hopeleſs fear.' There be three places of ſcripture which do ſpeak moſt of this ſin, and thence we will prove every part of this deſcription, in ſo far as may be uſeful to our preſent purpoſe; by which it will appear that none who have a mind for Chriſt, need ſtumble at what is ſpoken of this ſin in ſcripture. See Matt. xii. 23--32. Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6. and x. 25,-29.

Firſt then, let us conſider the object about which this ſin, or ſinful acting of the man guilty thereof, is converſant, and that is the chief goſpel-truth and way of ſalvation; both which run to one thing. It is the way which God hath contrived for ſaving of ſinners by Jeſus Chriſt the promiſed Meſſiah and Saviour, by whoſe death and righteouſneſs men are to be ſaved, as he hath held forth in the ordinances, confirm-

ing the ſame by many mighty works in ſcripture tending thereaway. This way of ſalvation is the object. The Phariſees oppoſe this, that Chriſt was the Meſſiah, Matt. xii. 23, 24. 'And all the people ſaid is not this the ſon of 'David? but when the Phariſees heard it, they 'ſaid, this fellow doth not caſt out devils but by 'Beelzebub the prince of devils.' The wrong is done againſt the Son of God, Heb. vi. 6. 'It is impoſſible to renew them again unto re-'pentance, ſeeing they crucify to themſelves the 'Son of God afreſh, and put him to an open 'ſhame.' And againſt the blood of the covenant, and the ſpirit graciouſly offering to apply theſe things, Heb. x. 29. 'Of how much ſorer 'puniſhment ſuppoſe ye, ſhall he be thought 'worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son 'of God, and hath counted the blood of the co-'venant wherewith he was ſanctified, an unho-'ly thing and hath done deſpite unto the ſpirit 'of grace?'

Secondly, In the deſcription, conſider the qualification of this object. It is ſingularly made out to the party by the Spirit of God, both in the truth and good thereof. This ſaith, 1. That there muſt be a knowledge of the truth and way of ſalvation. The Phariſees knew that Chriſt was the heir, Matt. xxi. 38. 'But 'when they ſaw the Son, they ſaid among 'themſelves, this is the heir, come let us kill 'him.' The party hath knowledge, Heb. x. 26. 'But if we ſin wilfully, after that we have 'received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth

'remaineth no more ſacrifice for ſins.' 2. That knowledge of the thing muſt not ſwim only in the head, but there muſt be ſome half heart perſwaſion of it. 'Chriſt knew the Phariſees 'thoughts,' Matt. xii. 23. and ſo did judge them, and that the contrary of what they ſpake was made out upon their heart. There is a taſting which is beyond ſimple enlightning, Heb. vi. 4, 5. 'For it is impoſſible for thoſe 'who were once enlightned, and have taſted of 'the heavenly gift, and have taſted of the good 'word of God, and of the powers of the world 'to come.' Yea, there is ſuch a perſwaſion ordinarily as leadeth to a deal of outward ſanctification, Heb. x. 29. 'Who have counted the 'blood of the covenant wherewith they were 'ſanctified an unholy thing.' 3. This perſwaſion muſt not only be of the verity of the thing, but of the good of it. The party 'taſteth the good word of God, and the powers 'of the world to come,' Heb. vi. 5. and he apprehendeth the things as eligible. 4. This perſwaſion is not made out only by ſtrength of argument, but alſo by an enlightning work of God's Spirit, ſhining on the truth, and making it conſpicuous: therefore is that ſin called, 'The ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt,' Matt. xii. 31. Mark iii. 29. The perſons are ſaid 'to 'have been partakers of the Holy Ghoſt,' Heb. vi. 4. 'and to do deſpite unto the ſpirit of grace,' Heb. x. 29. who was in the neareſt ſtep of a gracious operation with them.

Thirdly, In this deſcription, conſider the

acting of the party against the object so qualified. It is a rejecting and oppoſing of it; which importeth, 1. That men have once, some way at least, been in hands with it, or had the offer of it, as is true of the Pharisees. 2. That they do reject, even with contempt, what they had of it, or in their offer. The Pharisees deny it, and speak disdainfully of Christ, Matth. xii. 24. 'This fellow doth not 'cast out Devils, but by Beelzebub the prince 'of Devils.' They 'fall away,' intending 'to put Christ to an open shame,' Heb. vi. 6. 3. The men set themselves against it by the spirit of persecution, as the Pharisees did still. They rail against it; therefore it is called 'Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost,' Matth. xii. 24, 31. They would crucify Christ again, if they could, Heb. vi. 6. They are adversaries, Heb. x. 27.

Fourthly, Consider the properties of this acting. 1. It is avowed, that is, not seeking to shelter or hide itself. The Pharisees speak against Christ publicly, Matth. xii. 24. They would 'have Christ brought to an open shame,' Heb. vi. 6. They forsake the ordinances which favour that way, Heb. x. 25. and despise the danger; for, 'looking for indignation, they 'trample that blood still,' Heb. x. 27, 29. 2. The party acteth freely. It is not from unadvisedness, nor from force or constraint, but an acting of free choice; nothing doth force the Pharisees to speak against and persecute Christ. They crucify to themselves, they re-act the murder

murder of their own free accord, and in their own bosom, none constraining them, Heb. vi. 6, They sin of free choice, or, as the word may be rendered, *spontaneously*, Heb. x. 26. 3. It is acted wilfully. They are so resolute, they will not be diffuaded by any offer, or the most precious means, as is clear in the foresaid scriptures. 4. It is done maliciously, so as it proceeds not so much, if at all, from a temptation to pleasure, profit or honour. It proceedeth not from fear, or force, or from any good end proposed; but out of heart-malice against God and Christ, and the advancement of his glory and kingdom: so that it is of the very nature of Satan's sin, who hath an irreconcileable hatred against God, and the remedy of sin, because his glory is thereby advanced. This is a special ingredient in this sin. The Pharisees are found guilty of heart-malice against Christ, since they spake so against him, and not against their own children casting out Devils; and this is the force of Christ's argument; 'If I by Beelzebub cast out Devils, by 'whom do your children cast them out?' Matt. xii. 27. They do their utmost to 'crucify 'Christ again, and to bring him to an open 'shame,' Heb. vi. 6. They are adversaries like the Devil, Heb. x. 5. It is done despitefully. The malice must bewray itself. The Pharisees must proclaim that Christ hath correspondence with Devils, Matth. xii. 24. He must 'be put to an open shame, and crucified 'again,' Heb. vi. 6. They must 'tread under

'foot

'foot that blood, and do despite to the Spirit,' Heb. x. 29. So that the party had rather perish a thousand times, than be in Christ's debt for salvation.

The last thing in the description, is, The ordinary attendant or consequence of this sin; it breedeth desperate and hopeless fear. They fear him whom they hate with a slavish hopeless fear, such as Devils have, Heb. x. 27. 'A certain fearful looking for of judgment, and 'fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries.' They know that God will put out his power against them: they tremble in the remembrance of it; and if they could be above him, and destroy him, they covet it; and since they cannot reach that, they hate with the utmost of heart-malice, and do persecute him, and all that is his, with despite.

As for the third thing proposed, viz. the Conclusions to be drawn from what is said, whereby we will speak directly to the objection. 1. As I hinted before, since the sin against the Holy Ghost is so remarkable, and may be well known where it is, none should charge themselves with it, unless they can prove and instruct the charge; for it is a great wrong done unto God, to labour to persuade my soul that he will never pardon me: it is the very way to make me desperate, and to lead me unto the unpardonable sin; therefore, unless thou can and dare say, that thou dost hate the way which God hath devised for saving of sinners, and dost resolve to oppose the thriving of

his

his kingdom, both with thy ſelf and others, out of malice and deſpite againſt God, thou oughteſt not to ſuſpect thyſelf guilty of this ſin. 2. Whatſoever thou haſt done againſt God, if thou doſt rue it, and wiſh it were undone, thou cannot be guilty of this ſin; for in it, heart-malice and deſpite againſt God do ſtill prevail. 3. If thou art content to be his debtor for pardon, and would be infinitely obliged unto him for it, then thou cannot in that caſe be guilty of the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt; for, as we ſhewed before they who are guilty of it, do ſo deſpite God, that they would not be his debtors for ſalvation. 4. Whatſoever thou haſt done, if thou haſt a deſire after Jeſus Chriſt, and doſt look with a ſore heart after him, and cannot think of parting with his bleſſed company for ever, or, if thou muſt ſhed with him, yet doſt wiſh well to him, and all his, thou needeſt not ſuſpect thyſelf to be guilty of this unpardonable ſin; for there can be no ſuch hatred of him in thy boſom, as is neceſſarily required to make up that ſin. 5. If thou would be above the reach of that ſin, and ſecure againſt it for ever, then go work up thy heart to pleaſe ſalvation by Chriſt Jeſus, and to cloſe with God in him, acquieſcing in him as the ſufficient ranſom and reſt, as we have been preſſing before, and yield to him to be ſaved in his way. Do this in good earneſt, and thou ſhalt be for ever put out of the reach of that ugly thing, wherewith Satan doth affright ſo many poor ſeekers of God.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

Objections, taken from want of power to believe, and unfruitfulneſs anſwered.

Object. ALthough I be not excluded from the benefit of the new covenant yet it is not in my power to believe upon Chriſt; for faith is the gift of God, and above the ſtrength of fleſh and blood.

Anſw. It is true, that ſaving faith, by which alone a man can heartily cloſe with God in Chriſt, is above our power, and is the gift of God, as we ſaid before in the premiſes: yet remember, 1. The Lord hath left it as a duty upon all who hear this goſpel, cordially by faith to cloſe with his offer of ſalvation thro' Chriſt, as is clear in the ſcripture. And you muſt know, that altho' it be not in our power to perform that duty of ourſelves; yet the Lord may juſtly condemn for not performing of it, and we are inexcuſable; becauſe at firſt he made man perfectly able to do whatſoever he ſhould command. 2dly, The Lord commanding this thing, which is above our power, willeth us to be ſenſible of our own inability to do the thing, and would have us putting it on him to work it in us. He hath promiſed to give the new heart, and he hath not excluded any from the benefit of that promiſe. 3dly, The Lord uſeth by theſe commands and invitations, and mens meditation on the ſame, and their ſupplication about the thing, to con-

convey power unto the soul to perform the duty.

Therefore, for answer to the objection, I do obtest thee in the Lord's name, to lay to heart these his commandments and promises, and meditate on them, and upon that blessed business of the new covenant, and pray unto God as you can, over them, 'for he will be 'enquired to do these things,' Ezek. xxxvi. 37. and lay thy cold heart to that device of God expresst in the scriptures, and unto Christ Jesus, who is given for a covenant to the people, and look to him for life and quickening. Go and essay to please that salvation in the way God doth offer it, and to close with, and rest on Christ for it, as if all were in thy power; yet looking to him for the thing, as knowing that it must come from him: and if thou do so, 'He who meets these who remember 'him in his ways,' Isa. lxiv. 5. will not be wanting on his part; and thou shalt not have ground to say, that thou movedst towards the thing until thou could do no more for want of strength, and so left it at God's door: it shall not fail on his part, if thou have a mind for the business; yea, I may say, if by all thou hast ever heard of that matter, thy heart loveth it, and desireth to be in hands with it, thou hast it already performed within thee, so that difficulty is past, before thou was aware of it.

Object. Many who have closed with Christ Jesus, as said is, are still complaining of their leanness and fruitlesness, which maketh my heart

heart lay the less weight on that duty of believing.

Answ. If thou be convinced that it is a duty to believe on Christ, as said is, you may not shift it under any pretence. As for these complaints of some who have looked after him, not admitting every one to be judge of his own fruit, I say,

I. Many by their jealousies of God's love, and by their misbelief, after they have so closed with God, do obstruct many precious communications, which otherwise would be let out to them, Matth. xiii. 58. 'And he did not many 'mighty works there, because of their unbe-'lief.'

II. It cannot be that any whose heart is gone out after Christ, have found him a wilderness, Jer. ii. 31. Surely they find somewhat in their Spirit swaying them towards God in these two great things, viz. How to be found in him in that day, Phil. iii. 8, 9. 'Yea, doubt-'less, and I count all things but loss, for the 'excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus 'my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss 'of all things, and do count them but dung 'that I may win Christ, and be found in him, 'not having mine own righteousness which is 'of the law, but that which is thro' the faith 'of Christ, the righteousness which is of God 'by faith:' and, How to be forthcoming to his praise in the land of the living. Psal. cxix. 17. 'Deal bountifully with thy servant, that 'I may live and keep thy word.' Psal. lvi. 13.

'Wilt

'Wilt thou not deliver my feet from falling, 'that I may walk before God in the light of 'the living?' They find theſe two things aloft in the ſoul, and that is much. Moreover, they ſhall, after ſearch, if they judge aright, find ever ſuch an emptineſs in the creatures, which abundance of the creature cannot fill up: all is vanity, only God can fill the empty room in their heart; and when he but breathed a little there is no room for additional comfort from creatures. This faith, that God hath captivated the man, and hath fixed that ſaving principle in the underſtanding and heart. 'Who is God but the Lord? Worſhip him, 'all ye gods,' Pſal. xcvii. 7. Yea, further, theſe whoſe heart hath cloſed with God in Chriſt, as ſaid is, will not deny that there have been ſeaſonable preventings and quickenings now and then, when the ſoul was like to fail, Pſal. xxi. 3. 'For thou preventeſt me with the 'bleſſings of thy goodneſs,' Pſal. xciv. 18, 19. 'When I ſaid, 'My foot ſlippeth, thy mer-'cy, O Lord, held me up. In the multitude 'of my thoughts within me, thy comforts de-'light my ſoul.' Therefore let none ſay, that there is no fruit following, and let none ſhift their duty upon the unjuſt and groundleſs complaints of others.

CHAP. VIII.

Of covenanting with God.

Object. ALtho' I judge it my duty to cloſe with God's device in the covenant,

I am in the dark how to manage that duty; for ſometimes God doth offer to be our God without any mention of Chriſt, and ſometimes ſaith, that he will betrothe us unto him; and in other places of ſcripture, we are called to come to Chriſt, and he is the Bridegroom. Again, God ſometimes ſpeaketh of himſelf as a Father to men; ſometimes as a Huſband; Chriſt is ſometimes called the Huſband, and ſometimes a Brother, which relations ſeem inconſiſtent, and do much put me in the dark how to apprehend God, when my heart would agree with him, and cloſe with him.

Anſw. It may be very well ſaid, That men do come to God, or cloſe with him; and yet they come to Chriſt and cloſe with him. They may be ſaid to come under a marriage-relation unto God, and unto Chriſt alſo, who is Huſband, Father, Brother, &c. to them; and there is no ſuch myſtery here as ſome do conceive.

For the better underſtanding of it, conſider theſe few things. I. Altho' God made man perfect at the beginning, and put him in ſome capacity of tranſacting with him immediately, Eccl. vii. 29. 'God hath made man upright.' Gen. ii. 16, 17. 'And the Lord God created 'the man, ſaying, Of every tree of the gar-'den thou mayeſt freely eat,' &c. yet man, by his fall, did put himſelf at a perfect diſtance with God, and in an utter incapacity to bargain or deal any more with him immediately.

II. The Lord did, after Adam's fall, make manifeſt the new covenant, in which he did ſignify

ſignify he was content to tranſact with man again in and thro' a Mediator; and ſo did appoint men to come to him thro' Chriſt, Heb. vii. 25. 'He is able to ſave them to the uttermoſt, that come to God by him,' and to look for acception only in him, Eph. i. 6. 'To the 'praiſe of his grace, wherein he hath made us 'accepted in the beloved,' ordaining men to hear Chriſt, he being the only party in whom God was well pleaſed, Matth. xvii. 5. 'This 'is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſ-'ed, hear ye him.'

III. This matter is ſo clear, and ſuppoſed to be ſo notour in the ſcripture, and ſo manifeſt to all who are under the ordinances, that the Lord doth often ſpeak of tranſacting with himſelf, not making mention of the Mediator, becauſe it is ſuppoſed, that every one in the church knoweth that now there is no dealing with God, except by and thro' Chriſt Jeſus the Mediator.

IV. Conſider that Chriſt Jeſus, God-man, is not only a fit tryſting-place for God and men to meet into, and a fit ſpokeſman to treat between the parties now at variance, 2 Cor. v. 19. 'God was in Chriſt reconciling the world 'to himſelf.' But we may ſay alſo, he is immediate Bridegroom; and ſo our cloſing or tranſacting with God may be juſtly called, '-The marriage of the King's Son,' and the elect may be called, 'The Lamb's wife;'-Chriſt Jeſus being, as it were, the hand which God holdeth out unto men, and on which they lay

hold when they deal with God. And so thro' and by Christ we close with God, as our God, on whom our soul doth terminate lastly and ultimately thro' Christ, 1 Pet. i. 21. 'Who by 'him do believe in God that raised him from 'the dead, and gave him glory, that your faith 'and hope might be in God.'

V. Consider that the divers relations mentioned in scripture, are set down, to signify the sure and indissoluble union and communion between God and his people: whatsoever nearness is between head and members, root and branches, king and subjects, shepherd and flock, father and children, brother and brother, husband and wife, &c. all is here, John xvii. 21, 22, 23, 26. and they shall be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they 'also may be one in us: That the world may 'believe that thou hast sent me. And the 'glory which thou gavest me, I have given them: 'that they may be one, even as we are one. I 'in them, and thou in me, that they may be 'made perfect in one, and that the world may 'know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved 'them, as thou hast loved me. And I have 'declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast 'loved me, may be in them and I in them.' So that whatsoever be spoken in scripture, people may be clear, that God calleth them to be reconciled unto him thro' Christ, and doth offer himself to be their God and husband in him alone: And men are to accept God to be their God

God in Chriſt, pleaſing that way of relief for poor man, and to give up themſelves unto God in Chriſt, in whom alone they can be accepted. And they who cloſe with Chriſt, they do cloſe with God in him, 'who is in Chriſt reconcil-'ing the world to himſelf, 2Cor v. 19. John xiv. 8, 9, 10, 11. And we are not to dip further into the divers relations mentioned in ſcripture, between God, or Chriſt, or men, then as they may point out union and communion or nearneſs with God thro' Chriſt Jeſus, and our advantage thereby.

Theſe things being clear we will not multiply words: but ſince to believe on Chriſt is the great duty required of all that hear this goſpel, we obteſt every one in the Lord's name, to whom the report of this ſhall come, that without delay they take to heart their loſt condition in themſelves, and that they lay to heart the relief which God hath provided by Jeſus Chriſt, whereof he hath made a free offer unto all who will be content of the ſame, and to be ſaved that way and that they lay to heart that there is no other way of eſcape from the wrath that is to come, becauſe of which men would be glad, at the laſt day to run into a lake of melted lead, to be hid from the face of the Lamb, whom they do here deſpiſe: we ſay, We obteſt all in the conſideration of theſe things, to work up their heart to this buſineſs, and to lay themſelves open for God, and to receive him thro' Chriſt in the offers of the goſpel, acquieſcing in him, as the only deſireable and ſa-

tisfying good, that so they may secure themselves. Go speedily and search for his offers of peace and salvation in the scripture, and work up your heart and soul to close with them, and with Christ in them, and with God in Christ, and do it so, as you may have this to say, That you were serious, and in earnest, and cordial here, as ever you were in any thing to your apprehension; and for ought you know, Christ is the choice of your heart, at least you neither know nor allo wany thing to the contrary; whereupon your heart doth appeal unto God to search and try if there be ought amiss, to ratify it, and lead into the right way.

Now this cleaving of the heart unto him and casting itself upon him, to be saved in his way, is believing; which doth indeed secure a man from the wrath that is to come, because now he hath received Christ, and believeth on him, and so shall not enter into condemnation, as saith the scripture.

Object. When I hear what it is to believe on Christ Jesus, I think sometimes I have faith; for I dare say, to my apprehension, I please the invention of saving sinners by Christ Jesus, my heart goeth out after him, and doth terminate upon him as a satisfying treasure; and I am glad to accept God to be my God in him. But I often do question if ever I have done so, and so am, for the most part, kept hesitating and doubting if I do believe, or be savingly in covenant with God.

Answ. It is ordinary for many whose hearts

are

are gone out after Chriſt in the goſpel, and have received him, to bring the ſame in queſtion again: therefore I ſhall adviſe one thing as a notable help to fix the ſoul in the maintaining faith and an intereſt in God, and that is, that men not only cloſe heartily with God in Chriſt, as ſaid is, but alſo that they "expreſly, expli-"cately, by the word of mouth, and *vive voce*, "and formally cloſe with Chriſt Jeſus, and ac-"cept God's offer of ſalvation thro' him, and "ſo make a covenant with God." And this, by God's bleſſing, may contribute not a little for eſtabliſhing them anent their ſaving intereſt in God.

Before I ſpeak directly to this expreſs covenanting with God, I premiſe theſe few things. I do not here intend a covenanting with God, eſſentially differing from the covenant between God and the viſible church, as the Lord doth hold it out in his revealed will; neither do I intend a covenant, differing eſſentially from the tranſacting of the heart with God in Chriſt formerly ſpoken unto: It is the ſame covenant; only it differeth by a ſingular circumſtance, viz. the formal expreſſion of the thing which the heart did before practiſe.

II. I grant this expreſs covenanting and tranſacting with God is not abſolutely neceſſary for a man's ſalvation; for if any perſon cloſe heartily and ſincerely with God, offering himſelf in Chriſt in the goſpel, his ſoul and ſtate is thereby ſecured, according to the ſcripture, altho' he utter not words with his mouth: but this

expreſs

expreſs verbal covenanting with God is very expedient for the better being of a man's ſtate, and his more comfortable maintaining of an intereſt in Chriſt Jeſus.

III. This expreſs covenanting with God by word of mouth is of no worth, without ſincere heart-cloſing with God in Chriſt joined with it; for without that, it is but a profaning of the Lord's name, and a mocking of him to his face, ſo 'to draw near unto him with the lips whilſt 'the heart is far away from him.

IV. I grant both cordial and verbal tranſacting with God will not make out a man's gracious eſtate unto him, ſo as to put and keep it above controverſy, without the joint witneſs of the ſpirit, by which we know what is freely given unto us of God; yet this explicate way of tranſacting with God, joined with that heart-cloſing with him in Chriſt, contributes much for clearing up unto a man, that there is a fixed bargain between God and him, and will do much to ward off him many groundleſs jealouſies and objections of an unſtable mind and heart, which uſeth affrontedly to deny this hour, what it did really act and perform the former hour. This explicate covenanting is an inſtrument taken of what paſt between God and the ſoul, and ſo hath its own advantage for ſtrengthning of Faith.

As for this expreſs covenanting, we ſhall 1. Shew that it is a very warrantable practice. 2. We ſhall ſhew ſhortly what is preparatorily required of thoſe who do ſo tranſact with God. 3. How

3. How men ſhall go about that duty. 4. What ſhould follow thereupon.

As to the firſt, I ſay, it is a warrantable practice, and an incumbent duty, expreſly and by word to covenant with God: which appeareth thus;

I. In many places of ſcripture, if we look to what they may bear, according to their ſcope, and the analogy of faith, God hath commanded it, and left on people as a duty, Iſa. xliv. 5. 'One ſhall ſay, I am the Lord's.' Iſa. xlv. 25. 'Surely ſhall one ſay, in the Lord have I righteouſneſs and ſtrength.' Jer. iii. 4. 'Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, my father, thou art the guide of my youth.' Zech. xiii. 9. 'They ſhall ſay, the Lord is my God.' Hoſ. ii. 16. 'Thou ſhalt call me Iſhi,' and in many places elſewhere. Now ſince God hath ſo clearly left it on men in the letter of the word, they may be perſuaded, that it is a practice warranted and allowed by him, and well-pleaſing unto him.

II. Argument. It is the approven practice of the ſaints in ſcripture, thus expreſly to covenant with God, and they have found much quiet in that duty afterwards. David did often expreſly ſay unto God, that he was his God, his portion, and that himſelf was his ſervant. Thomas will put his intereſt out of queſtion with it, John xx 28. 'And Thomas anſwered and ſaid unto him, my Lord, and my God.' Yea, I ſay, the ſaints are much quieted in remembrance of what hath paſt that way between God and them,

them, Pſal. lxxiii. 25. 'Whom have I in hea-
'ven but thee? and there is none upon all the
'earth that I deſire beſides thee.' Pſal. cxlii. 5.
'I cried unto thee, O Lord, I ſaid, thou art my
'refuge, and my portion in the land of the liv-
'ing.' We find it often ſo in the book of the Canticles. Now ſhall the chief worthies of God be ſo much in a duty, breeding ſo much quiet and ſatisfaction to them in many caſes, and ſhall we under the New Teſtament, unto whom acceſs is miniſtred abundantly, and who partake of the ſap of the olive; ſhall we, I ſay, ly behind in this approven piece of homelineſs with God? ſince we ſtudy to imitate that cloud of witneſſes in other things, as faith, zeal, patience, &c. let us alſo imitate them in this.

III. Argument. The thing about which we move here, is a matter of the greateſt concernment in all the world; 'It is the life of our ſoul,' Deut. xxxii. 47. Oh, ſhall men ſtudy to be expreſs, explicite, plain and peremptory in all their other great buſineſſes, becauſe they are ſuch; and ſhall they not much more be peremptory and expreſs in this, which doth moſt concern them? I wonder that many not only do ſpeak it with their mouth, but they do not ſwear and ſubſcribe it with their hand, and do not every thing for ſecuring of God to themſelves in Chriſt, and themſelves unto God, which the ſcripture doth warrant, Iſa. xliv. 5.

This alſo may have its own weight as an argument to preſs this way of covenanting with God, that the buſineſs of an intereſt in Chriſt, and of a real and honeſt tranſacting with him,

is a thing which in the experience of ſaints, is moſt frequently brought upon debate and in queſtion; there men had need, all the way's they can, even by thought, word and deed, to put it to a point.

This alſo may have place here for preſſing this as a duty, that God is ſo formal, expreſs, diſtinct and legal, to ſay ſo, in all the buſineſs of man's ſalvation, viz. Chriſt muſt be a near kinſman, to whom the right of redemption doth belong; he muſt be choſen, called, authorized and ſent; covenants formally drawn between the Father and him, the Father accepting payment and ſatisfaction, giving formal diſcharges, all done clearly and expreſly. Shall the Lord be ſo expreſs, plain and peremptory in every part of the buſineſs, and ſhall our part of it reſt in a confuſed thought, and we be as dumb beaſts before him? if it were a marriage between man and wife, it would not be judged enough, altho' there were conſent in heart given by the woman, and known to the man; if ſhe did never expreſs ſo much by word, being in a capacity to do ſo. Now this covenant between God and man, is held out in ſcripture, as a 'marriage between man and wife,' Hoſ. ii. 19, 20. 2 Cor. xi. 2. The whole Song of Solomon ſpeaketh it. The Lord uſeth ſimilitudes, to ſignify unto us, what he intends; and ſurely this is a ſpecial requiſite in marriage, that the wife give an expreſs and explicite conſent unto the buſineſs: the man ſaith, ſo I take thee to be my lawful wife, and do oblige myſelf to be a dutiful

ful husband: the woman is obliged on the other part, to express her consent, and to say, even so I take thee to be my lawful husband: and do promise duty and subjection. It is so here; the Lord saith, 'I do betrothe thee unto 'me in faithfulness, and thou shalt call me Ishi,' that is, my husband, Hos. ii. 16, 20. I will be for thee as a head and husband, if 'thou wilt 'not be for another,' Hos. iii. 3. The man ought to answer, and say, Amen, so be it, thou shalt be my God, my head and Lord, and I shall and will be thine, and not for another, Cant. vi. 3. 'I am my beloved's, and my beloved is 'mine.' And so this making of the covenant with God, is called, 'a giving of the hand to 'him,' as the word is, 2 Chron. xxx. 8. which doth hint a very express, formal, explicite and positive bargaining with God. So then, we conclude it to be an incumbent duty, and a very approven practice, necessary for the quieting of a man's mind, and his more comfortable being in covenant with God, and more fully answering God's condescendency and offer in that great primary promise, 'I will be your God, and ye shall be my people.'

Not only may and should people thus expressly close with God in Christ for fixing their heart; but they may upon some occasions, renew this verbal transaction with God, especially when thro' temptations they are made to question if ever they have really and sincerely closed covenant with God. As they are then to put out new acts of faith, embracing Christ as the desi-

reable

ſireable portion and treaſure, and alſo upon other occaſions, ſo it were expedient, eſpecially if there remain any doubt anent the thing, that by *vive voce* and expreſs word, they determine that controverſy, and 'ſay of the Lord, and to 'him, that he is their refuge and portion,' Pſal. xci. 2, Pſal. cxlii. 5. We find the ſaints doing ſo, and we may imitate them, eſpecially,

I. In the time of great backſliding, people were wont to renew the covenant with God, and we ſhould do ſo alſo; our heart ſhould go out after Chriſt in the promiſes of reconciliation with God, for he is our peace upon all occaſions, and our advocate, and we are bound to apprehend him ſo, when we tranſgreſs, 1 John ii. 1 'If any man ſin, we have an advocate with 'the Father, Jeſus Chriſt the righteous,' and to expreſs ſo much by word, as the ſaints did in their formal renewing of the covenant.

II. When people are in hazard, and difficulties are preſent or foreſeen, then it were good that they ſhould ſend out their heart after him, and expreſs their adhering unto him, for ſecuring their own heart. We find Joſhua doing ſo, when he was to ſettle in the land of Canaan, in the midſt of ſnares, Joſh. xxiv. ſo David doth in his ſtraits, Pſal. lvii. 1. 'In the ſhadow 'of thy wings will I make my refuge, until 'thoſe calamities be overpaſt.'

III. When men apprehend God to be at a diſtance from them, and their ſoul to be under withering and decay, then it is ſafeſt heartily to cloſe with Chriſt, and embrace him by faith

for the ſecuring of the ſoul; and it were good to put it out of queſtion, by the expreſſion of the thing. This is the ready way to draw ſap from Chriſt the root, for recovering of the ſoul, and for eſtabliſhing the heart before him. The Spouſe in the Song of Solomon doth ſo, thus aſſerting her intereſt in him, when in ſuch a condition profeſſing and avowing him to be her Beloved, Cant. v.

IV. At the celebration of the Lord's Supper, men ſhould thus cordially cloſe with God in Chriſt, and ſpeak and expreſs ſo much; for, that is a feaſt of love; and then and there we come under a ſolemn profeſſion of cloſing with God in Chriſt perſonally and openly, and do receive the ſeal of it: it is therefore beſeeming, at that time, to bring up both heart and tongue to ſecond and anſwer our profeſſion, apprehending God to be our God, and reſigning over ourſelves to be his, and at his diſpoſing.

We ſhall not confine the Lord's people to times and ſeaſons of this duty, the Lord may bind it upon them at his pleaſure; only there is hazard, that by too frequent expreſs covenanting with God, men turn too formal in it: therefore it is not ſo fit that people ſhould ordinarily at full length renew that explicite tranſaction with God, but rather to declare unto God, that they adhere unto the covenant made with him, and that they do maintain, and will never revoke nor recal the ſame; and withal, they may hint the ſum of it, in laying claim unto God in Chriſt, as their own God: and this they may

may do often, even in all their addreſſes to God. And probably this is the thing deſigned by the ſaints in their ſo ordinary practice in ſcripture, whilſt they aſſert their intereſt in God, as their God and portion; and it is fit, that men, in all their walk, hold their heart at the buſineſs, by heart-cleaving to God in Chriſt. 'The life 'we live in the fleſh ſhould be by faith in the 'Son of God,' Gal. ii. 20.

2. As to the ſecond thing, viz. what is preparatorily required of him who is expreſly to tranſact with God here: beſide what we ſpake before as previous to a man's cloſing with Chriſt Jeſus, we only add, 1. That he who would explicitely bargain with God, muſt know, that to do ſo, is warranted and allowed by God, as we ſhewed before: if this be wanting, a man cannot do it in faith, and ſo it will be ſin unto him, Rom. xiv. 2. 'Whatſoever 'is not of faith is ſin.' 2. The man muſt labour to bring up his heart to the thing, that it do not belie the tongue; it will be a great mocking of God, ſo to 'draw near him with the 'lips, whilſt the heart is far off from him, Iſa. xxix. 13.

3. The third thing to be conſidered in this preſs verbal covenanting with God, is the way how it is to be performed and managed, and beſide what was ſaid before in heart-cloſing with Chriſt, I add here,

I. The man ſhould do it confidently, not only believing that he is about his duty when he doth it, but alſo, that God in Chriſt Jeſus will

accept his poor imperfect way of doing his duty; He doth 'accept a man according to what 'he hath, if there be a willing mind,' 2 Cor. viii. 12. A mite is accepted, ſince it is 'all the 'poor woman's ſubſtance,' Mark xii. 44. Yea, if it can be attained, the man ſhould believe that the iſſue and conſequence of this tranſacting ſhall prove comfortable, and all ſhall be well; and that God who engageth for all in the covenant, (ſince he hath determined the man to this happy choice) will in ſome meaſure make him forthcoming, and will perfect what concerns him: 'faithful is he that calleth you, who alſo 'will do it,' 1 Theſ. v. 24. If this confidence be wanting, the matter will be done with much fear and jealouſy, if not worſe; and will ſtill prove a diſquieting buſineſs to the man.

II. It ſhould be done holily. It is called 'the holy covenant,' Luke i. 72. 'The holy 'things of David,' Acts xiii. 34. 'Here it were fitting, that what is done in this expreſs tranſacting with God, ſhould not be done paſſingly, and on the by, but in ſome ſpecial addreſs unto God; the thing ſhould be ſpoken unto the Lord, Pſal. cxlii. 5. 'I cried unto thee, O 'Lord, I ſaid, thou art my refuge and portion.' It is beſeeming in ſo great a buſineſs, that a piece of time were ſet apart for confeſſion and ſupplication before God, yea, alſo the perſon ſo tranſacting with God, ſhould labour to have high apprehenſions of God's greatneſs and ſovereignty. 2 Sam. vii. 22. 'Thou art great, 'O Lord God: for there is none like thee, 'neither

'neither is there any God beſide thee,' altho' he thus humbleth himſelf to behold things in heaven and earth; and theſe high and holy thoughts of him, will and ſhould be attended with debaſing and humbling thoughts of ſelf, altho' admitted to this high dignity. 2 Sam. vii. 18. 'Then went king David in, and ſat 'before the Lord; and he ſaid, Who am I, 'O Lord God? And what is my houſe, that 'thou haſt brought me hitherto?' it is no ſmall thing to be allied unto, and with the great God of heaven, and his Son Chriſt; as David ſpeaketh when king Saul did offer, his daughter unto him, 1 Sam. xviii. 22. Yea, further, there ſhould be ſpecial guarding and watching, that the heart keep ſpiritual in tranſacting with God. There is great reaſon for this holy way of performing the duty; for men are ready to miſken themſelves, and to ſhape the Lord according to their own fancy, and to turn carnal in the buſineſs, ſince it is a marriage-tranſaction held out in all the ordinary expreſſions of love, as in the Song of Solomon, Iſa. lxii. 5. Zeph. iii. 17.

The fourth thing we ſhall ſpeak a word unto is, What ſhould follow upon this expreſs verbal covenanting with God. I ſay, beſide that union and communion with God in Chriſt, following upon believing, if a man explicitely by word tranſact with God.

I. He ſhould thenceforth be ſingularly careful to abide cloſe with God in all manner of converſation; for, if a man thenceforth do a-

ny thing unſuitable, he doth falſify his word before God, which will ſtick much in his conſcience, and prove a ſnare: If a man henceforth miſken God, and to take on him to diſpoſe of himſelf, ſince he is not his own, and hath opened his mouth unto the Lord, 'he makes 'enquiry after vows, and devoureth that which 'is holy,' Prov. xx. 25.

II. He who ſo tranſacteth with God, ſhould hold ſtedfaſt that determination and concluſion. It is a ſhame for a man, whoſe heart hath cloſed with God and whoſe mouth hath ratified and confirmed it ſolemnly before him, to contradict himſelf again, and to admit any thing to the contrary; he ought boldly to maintain the thing againſt all deadly.

Then let me obteſt you who deſire to be eſtabliſhed in the matter of your intereſt in God, that with all conveniency you ſet apart a piece of time for prayer before God, and labouring to work up your heart to ſerioufneſs, affection, and the faith of the duty, to make a covenant, and to tranſact with God by expreſs words after this manner.

'O Lord, I am a loſt and broken creature 'by nature, and by innumerable actual tranſ-'greſſions, which I do confeſs particularly be-'fore thee this day: And altho' being born 'within the viſible church, I was from the 'womb in covenant with thee, and had the 'ſame ſealed to me in baptiſm; yet for a long 'time, I have lived without God in the world, 'ſenſeleſs, and ignorant of my obligation, by

'virtue

'virtue of that covenant: thou haſt at length
'diſcovered unto me, and bound upon my
'heart my miſerable ſtate in myſelf, and haſt
'made manifeſt unto my heart the ſatisfying
'relief thou haſt provided by Chriſt Jeſus, of-
'fering the ſame freely unto me, upon con-
'dition that I would accept of the ſame, and
'would cloſe with thee as my God in Chriſt,
'warranting and commanding me, upon my
'outmoſt peril, to accept of this offer, and to
'flee unto Chriſt Jeſus: yea, to my apprehen-
'ſion, now thou haſt ſovereignly determined
'my heart, and ſhaped it for Chriſt Jeſus,
'leading it out after him in the offers of the
'goſpel, cauſing me to approach unto the liv-
'ing God, to cloſe ſo with him, and to acqui-
'eſce in his offer, without any known guile.
'And that I may come up to that eſtabliſhment
'of ſpirit in this matter, which would be to my
'comfort, and the praiſe of thy glorious grace:
'therefore, I am here this day to put that mat-
'ter out of queſtion by expreſs words before
'thee, acccording to thy will. And now, I, un-
'worthy as I am, do declare, that I believe that
'Chriſt Jeſus, who was ſlain at Jeruſalem,
'was the Son of God, and the Saviour of the
'world; I do believe that record, That there
'is life eternal for men in him, and in him
'only; I do this day in my heart pleaſe and
'acquieſce in that device of ſaving ſinners by
'him, and do entruſt my ſoul unto him; I do
'accept of reconciliation with God thro' him,
'and do cloſe with thee as my God in him;

I chooſe

'I chooſe him in all that he is, and all that
'may follow him, and do reſign up myſelf,
'and what I am, or have, unto thee; deſiring
'to be divorced from every thing hateful un-
'to thee, and that without exception, or re-
'ſervation of any thing conſiſtent with my
'knowledge, or intended reverſion. Here I
'give the hand to thee, and do take all things
'about me witneſſes, that I, whatever I be, or
'have hitherto been, do accept of God's offer
'of peace thro' Chriſt; and do make a ſure
'covenant with thee this day, never to be
'ranverſed; hoping that thou wilt make all
'things forthcoming both on thy part and
'mine; ſeriouſly begging, as I deſire to be
'ſaved, that my corruptions may be ſubdued,
'and my neck brought under thy ſweet yoke,
'in all things, and my heart made cheerfully
'to acquieſce in whatſoever thou doſt unto
'me, or with me; in order to theſe ends.
'Now, glory be unto thee, O Father, who
'deviſed ſuch a ſalvation, and gave the Son to
'accompliſh it: glory be to Chriſt Jeſus, who
'at ſo dear a rate, did purchaſe the outletting
'of that love from the Father's boſom, and
'thro' whom alone this acceſs is granted, and
'in whom I am reconciled unto God, and ho-
'nourably united unto him, am no more an e-
'nemy or ſtranger: glory to the Holy Ghoſt,
'who did alarm me when I was deſtroying
'myſelf, and who did not only convince me of
'my hazard, but did alſo open my eyes to be-

'hold

'hold the relief provided in Christ; yea, and 'did persuade and determine my wild heart to 'fall in love with Christ, as the enriching 'treasure, and this day doth teach me how to 'covenant with God, and to impropriate to my-'self all the sure mercies of David, and blessings 'of Abraham, and to secure to myself the favour 'and friendship of God for ever. Now, with 'my soul, heart, head, and whole man, as I can, 'I do acquiesce in my choice, this day hence-'forth resolving not to be my own, but thine; 'and that the care of whatsoever concerns me, 'shall be on thee as my Head and Lord: pro-'testing humbly, that failings on my part, (a-'gainst which I resolve, thou knowest) shall 'not make void this covenant, for so hast thou 'said, which I intend not to abuse, but so 'much the more to cleave close unto thee; and 'I must have liberty to renew, ratify, and draw 'extracts of this transaction, as often as shall 'be found needful. Now I know thy consent 'to this bargain stands recorded in scripture, 'so as I need no new signification of it; and 'I having accepted of thy offer upon thy own 'terms, will henceforth wait for what is good, 'and for thy salvation in end. As thou art 'faithful, pardon what is amiss in my way of 'doing the thing, and accept me in my sweet 'Lord Jesus, in whom I only desire pardon. 'And in testimony hereof I set my seal that 'God is true, in declaring him a competent 'Saviour.'

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Let people covenant with God in fewer or more words, as the Lord ſhall diſpoſe them; for we intend no platform of words for any perſon: only it were fitting that men ſhould, before the Lord, acknowledge their loſt ſtate in themſelves, and the relief that is by Chriſt, and that they do declare that they accept of the ſame as it is offered in the goſpel, and do thankfully reſt ſatisfied with it, entruſting themſelves henceforth wholly unto God to be ſaved in his way, for which they wait according to his faithfulneſs.

If men would heartily and ſincerely do this, it might, thro' the Lord's bleſſing, help to eſtabliſh them againſt many fears and jealouſies; and they might date ſome good thing from this day and hour, which might prove comfortable unto them when they fall in the dark afterwards, and even when many failings do ſtare them in the face, perhaps at the hour of death. 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. 'Theſe be the laſt 'words of David——Altho' my houſe be not ſo 'with God; yet he hath made with me an 'everlaſting covenant, ordered in all things and 'ſure: for this is all my ſalvation, and all my 'deſire.' It is much if a man can appeal unto God, and ſay, Thou knoweſt there was a day and an hour, when in ſuch a place I did accept of peace thro' Chriſt, and did deliver up mine heart to thee, to write on it thy whole law without exception; heaven and earth are witneſſes of it. 'Remember the word unto

'thy

'thy ſervant, upon which thou haſt cauſed 'me to hope,' Pſal. cxix. 49.

Object. I dare not venture to ſpeak ſuch words unto God, becauſe I find not my heart coming up full length in affection and ſeriouſneſs: I ſhould but lie unto God, in tranſacting ſo with him.

Anſw. It is to be regretted that men's hearts doth not, with much benſail of deſire and affection, embrace and welcome that bleſſed offer and portion: yet for anſwer to the objection, remember, I. That in thoſe to whom the Lord giveth the new heart, forming Chriſt in them, the whole heart is not renewed: there is 'fleſh 'and ſpirit luſting againſt other, the one con-'trary unto the other, ſo as a man can neither 'do the good or evil he would do,' with full benſail, Gal. v. 17. It is well if there be a good part of the heart going out after Chriſt, deſiring to cloſe with him on his own terms.

II. That there is often a rational love in the heart unto Chriſt Jeſus, expreſſing itſelf by a reſpect to his commandments, 1 John v. 3. 'This is the love of God, that we keep his 'commandments; and his commandments are 'not grievous.' When there is not a ſenſible prevailing love which maketh the ſoul ſick, Cant. ii. 5. 'I am ſick of love.' Men muſt not always expect to find this. I ſay, then, altho' ſomewhat in your heart draw back; yet if you can ſay that you are convinced of your broken ſtate without him, that you want a righteouſneſs to cover your guilt, and that you want

want ſtrength to ſtand out againſt ſin, or to do what is pleaſing before God, and that you alſo ſee fulneſs in him; in both theſe reſpects, if you dare ſay, that ſomewhat within your heart would fain be at him upon his own terms, and would have both righteouſneſs for juſtification, and ſtrength in order to ſanctification; and that what is within you contradicting this is your burden, in ſome meaſure, and your bondage: if it be ſo, your heart is brought up a tolerable length; go on to the buſineſs, and determine the matter by covenanting with God, and ſay with your mouth, 'That you have 'both righteouſneſs and ſtrength in the Lord,' as he hath ſworn you ſhall do, Iſa. xlv. 23, 24. It is approven divinity to ſay unto God, "I "believe," when much miſbelief is in me, and the heart divided in the caſe, Mark ix. 24. 'Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief.' Withal, ſhew unto God how matters are in your heart, that ſo you may be without guile before him, concealing nothing from him; and put your heart, as it is, in his hand, to write his law on it, according to the covenant: for that is the thing he ſeeks of men, that they deliver up their heart to him, that he may ſtamp it with his whole will, without exception; and if you can heartily conſent unto that, judging Chriſt's blood a ſufficient ranſom and ſatisfaction for man's trangreſſions, you may go and expreſly ſtrike covenant with God, for your heart and affection is already engaged.

Obj ect.

Object. I dare not ſo covenant with God, leſt I break to him; yea, I perſuade myſelf, that if ſuch a temptation did offer, ſo and ſo circumſtantiated, I would fall before it, and ſuccumb: therefore to tranſact ſo with God, whilſt I foreſee ſuch a thing, were but to agrege my condemnation.

Anſw. I. You have already entered covenant with God, as you are a member of his viſible church: and what is now preſt upon you, is, but that you more heartily, ſincerely, particularly, and more expreſly covenant and tranſact with him: you are already obliged heartily to cloſe with God in Chriſt, and if you do it in heart; I hope the hazard is no greater by ſaying that you do ſo, or have done ſo.

II. What will you do if you ſhift hearty tranſacting with God in Chriſt, and do not accept his peace as it is offered? You have not a ſecond of it in the world; either you muſt do this or periſh for ever; and if you do it with your heart, you may alſo ſay it with your tongue.

III. If people may ſcar at covenanting with God, becauſe they will afterwards tranſgreſs, then not one man ſhould covenant with God; for ſurely every one will tranſgreſs afterwards, if they live any length of time after the tranſaction: and we know no way like this to ſecure men from falling; for if you covenant honeſtly with him, he engageth, beſide the new heart, to put his fear and law therein, to give his ſpirit to cauſe you walk in his way. And

when you covenant with God, you deliver up yourſelf unto him to be ſanctified and made conform to his will. It is rather a giving up of yourſelf to be led in his way in all things, and kept from every evil way, than any formal engagement on your part, to keep his way, and to hold off from evil: ſo that you need not ſcar at the covenant, the language whereof is, 'Wilt thou not be made clean?' Jer. xiii. 27. And all that ſhun to ſtrike covenant with God, do thereby declare, that they deſire not to be made clean.

IV. As it is hard for any to ſay confidently, they will tranſgreſs, if ſuch a temptation did offer, and ſo and ſo circumſtantiated, becauſe men may think that either God will keep a temptation out of their way, or not ſuffer them to be tempted above what they are able to bear, or give to them a way of eſcape, Pſal. lxvi. 1. 'God is our refuge and ſtrength, a 'very preſent help in trouble.' 1 Cor. x. 13. 'There hath no temptation taken you, but 'ſuch as is common to man: but God is faith-'ful, who will not ſuffer you to be tempted 'above that you are able: but will with the 'temptation alſo make a way to eſcape, that 'ye may be able to bear it.' So the queſtion is not, What I may do afterwards; but, What I may reſolve to do. If my heart charge me preſently with any deceit or reſolution to tranſgreſs, I muſt lay aſide that deceit before I tranſact with God: but if my heart charge me with no ſuch purpoſe, yea, I dare ſay, I reſolve

ſolve againſt every tranſgreſſion; and altho' I think I will fall before ſuch and ſuch a temptation, yet that thought floweth not from any allowed and approven reſolution to do ſo, but from knowledge of my own corruption, and of what I have done to provoke God to deſert me: but the Lord knows I reſolve not to tranſgreſs, nor do I approve any ſecret inclination of my heart to ſuch a ſin, but would reckon it my ſingular mercy to be kept from ſin in ſuch a caſe; and I judge myſelf a wretched man, becauſe of ſuch a body of death within me, which doth threaten to make me tranſgreſs. In that caſe, I ſay, 'My heart doth not 'condemn me, therefore I may and ought to 'have confidence before God,' 1 John iii. 21. If this then be the caſe, I ſay to thee, altho' thou ſhould afterwards fail many ways, and ſo perhaps draw upon thyſelf ſad temporal ſtrokes thereby, and loſe for a ſeaſon many expreſſions of his love; yet 'there is an Advocate with 'the Father to plead thy pardon,' 1 John ii. 1. who hath ſatisfied for our breaches, Iſa. liii. 5, 6. 'He was wounded for our tranſgreſſions, 'he was bruiſed for our iniquities; the chaſ-'tiſement of our peace was upon him, and with 'his ſtripes we are healed. All we like ſheep 'have gone aſtray, we have turned every one 'to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on 'him the iniquity of us all.' And for his ſake, God reſolveth to hold faſt the covenant with men after their tranſgreſſion, Pſal. lxxxix. 30,—37. 'If his children forſake my law, and

'walk not in my judgments; if they break 'my ſtatutes, and keep not my command-'ments: nevertheleſs, my loving kindneſs 'will I not utterly take from him, nor ſuffer 'my faithfulneſs to fail; my covenant will I 'not break, nor alter the thing that is gone 'out of my lips. Once have I ſworn by my 'holineſs.'——Elſe how could he be ſaid, 'to 'betrothe us unto himſelf for ever?' Hoſ. ii. 19, 20. And how could the covenant be called 'everlaſting, ordered in all things and ſure,' if there were not ground of comfort in it, 'even when our houſe is not ſo and ſo with 'God?' 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

Yea, it were no better than the covenant of works, if theſe who enter it with God, could ſo depart from him again, as to make it void unto themſelves, and to put themſelves into a worſe condition than they were in before they made it. Jer. xxxii. 40. 'And I will make an 'everlaſting covenant with them, that I will 'not turn away from them, to do them good.' Compared with Heb. viii. 6. 'But now hath 'he obtained a more excellent miniſtry, by how 'much more alſo he is the Mediator of a bet-'ter covenant, which was eſtabliſhed upon bet-'ter promiſes.' Mal. ii. 16. 'The Lord hat-'eth putting away.' No honeſt heart will ſtumble on this, but will rather be ſtrengthened thereby in duty, Hoſ. xiv. 4. to the end, 'I 'will heal their backſliding, I will love them 'freely; for mine anger is turned away from 'him——Who is wiſe, and he ſhall under-

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'ſtand theſe things? Prudent, and he ſhall 'know them? For the ways of the Lord are 'right, and the juſt ſhall walk in them.' For other ties and bonds, beſide the fear of divorce and puniſhment by death, do oblige the ingenuous wife unto duty; ſo here men will 'fear 'the Lord and his goodneſs,' Hoſ. iii. 5.

Object. I have at the celebration of the Lord's ſupper, and at ſome other occaſions, covenanted expreſly and verbally with God; but my fruitfulneſs in his ways, and the renewed jealouſies of my gracious ſtate, maketh me queſtion if ever I tranſacted with God in ſincerity, and I think I can do it no otherways than I have done it.

Anſw. I. Men are not to expect fruitfulneſs according to their deſire, nor full aſſurance of God's favour immediately after they have fled unto Chriſt, and expreſly tranſacted with God in him: theſe things will keep a man on work all his days. The ſaints had their failings and ſhort-comings, yea, and backſlidings, with many fits of dangerous miſbelief, after they had very ſeriouſly, and ſincerely, and expreſly cloſed with God, as their God in Chriſt.

II. Many do look for fruitfulneſs in their walk and eſtabliſhment of faith, from their own ſincerity in tranſacting with God, rather than from the Spirit of the Lord Jeſus. They heft their heart in their own honeſty and reſolutions, and not in the bleſſed root Chriſt Jeſus, without whom we can do nothing, and are vanity altogether in our beſt eſtate. Men ſhould

remember that one piece of grace cannot produce any degree of grace; further, nothing can work grace but the arm of JEHOVAH: and if men would lean unto Chriſt, and covenant with him as their duty abſolutely, whatſoever may be the conſequence, at leaſt, looking only to him for the ſuitable fruit, it ſhould fare better with them. God pleaſeth not that men ſhould betake themſelves unto Chriſt, and covenant with him for a ſeaſon, until they ſee if ſuch fruit and eſtabliſhment ſhall follow, propoſing to diſclaim their intereſt in him and the covenant, if ſuch and ſuch fruit doth not appear within ſuch a length of time. This is to put the ways of God to trial, and is very diſpleaſing unto him. Men muſt abſolutely cloſe with Chriſt, and covenant with him, reſolving to maintain theſe things as their duty and a ready way to reach fruit, whatſoever ſhall follow thereupon; they having a teſtimony within them, that they ſeriouſly deſign conformity to his revealed will in all things; and that they have cloſed covenant with him for the ſame end, as well as to be ſaved thereby.

III. Men ſhould be ſparing to bring in queſtion their ſincerity in tranſacting with God, unleſs they can inſtruct the ſame, or have great preſumptions for it. If you can inſtruct any deceit or guile in your tranſacting with him, you are obliged to diſclaim and rectify it, and to tranſact with God honeſtly, and without guile: but if you know nothing of your deceit or guile, in the day you did tranſact with him;

him; yea, if you can ſay, that you did appeal unto God in that day, that you dealt honeſtly with him, and intended not to deceive; and did obteſt him according to his faithfulneſs, to ſearch and try if there was any crookedneſs in your way, and to diſcover it unto you, and heal it, 'Search me, O God, and know my 'heart; try me, and know my thoughts: and 'ſee if there be any wicked way in me; and 'lead me in the way everlaſting, Pſal. cxxxix. 23, 24. and that afterwards you 'came to the 'light, that your deeds might be manifeſt,' John iii. 20, 21. And if you can ſay, that God's anſwers from his word to you, in ſo far as you could underſtand, were anſwers of peace, and confirmations of your ſincerity. Yea, further, if you dare ſay, that if upon life and death, you were again to tranſact with him, you can do it no other way, nor intend more ſincerity and ſeriouſneſs than before; then I dare ſay unto thee in the Lord's name, thou ought not to queſtion thy ſincerity in tranſacting with God, but to 'have confidence be-'fore God, ſince thy heart doth not condemn 'thee,' 1 John iii. 21. and thou art bound to believe, that 'God dealeth uprightly with the 'upright man, and with the pure doth ſhew 'himſelf pure,' Pſal. xviii. 25, 26. If a man intend honeſty, God will not ſuffer him to beguile himſelf; yea, the Lord ſuffereth no man to deceive himſelf, unleſs the man intend to deceive both God and men.

IV. There-

IV. Therefore impute your unfruitfulneſs to your unwatchfulneſs and your miſbelief, and impute your want of full aſſurance, unto an evil heart of unbelief, helped by Satan to act againſt the glorious free grace of God; and charge not theſe things upon want of ſincerity in your cloſing with Chriſt. And reſolve henceforth to abide cloſe by the root, and you ſhall bring forth more fruit; and by much fruit you lay yourſelf open to the witneſs of God's Spirit, which will teſtify with your ſpirit, that you have ſincerely and honeſtly cloſed with God, and that the reſt of your works are wrought in God, and approven of him; and ſo the witneſs of the Spirit and the water joining with the blood, whereupon you are to lay the weight of your ſoul and conſcience, and where alone you are to ſink the curſes of the law due unto you for all your ſins, and failings in your beſt things. Theſe three do agree in one, viz. That this is the way of life and peace, and that you have intereſt therein, and ſo you come to quietneſs and full aſſurance, John xv. 4, 5. 'Abide in me, and I in you: 'as the branch cannot bear fruit of itſelf, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me: I am the vine, ye are the 'branches; he that abideth in me, and I in 'him, the ſame bringeth forth much fruit; 'for without me ye can do nothing.' John. xiv. 21, 23. 'He that hath my command-'ments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth 'me; and he that loveth me, ſhall be loved of

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'my father, and I will love him, and will ma-
'nifeſt myſelf to him. If a man love me, he
'will keep my words: and my Father will love
'him, and we will come unto him, and make
'our abode with him.' Rom. viii. 16. 'The
'ſpirit itſelf beareth witneſs with our ſpirit,
'that we are the children of God.' 1 John. v. 8.
'There are three that bear witneſs in earth,
'the ſpirit, and the water, and the blood; and
'theſe three agree in one.'

O bleſſed bargain of the new covenant, and thrice bleſſed Mediator of the ſame! let him ride proſperouſly, and ſubdue nations and languages, and gather in all his jewels, that honourable company of the firſt-born, that ſtately troop of kings and prieſts, whoſe glory it ſhall be to have waſhed their garments in the blood of that ſpotleſs Lamb, and whoſe happineſs ſhall continually flouriſh in following him whitherſoever he goeth, and in being in the immediate company of the ancient of days, one ſight of whoſe face ſhall make them in a manner forget that ever they were in the earth. Oh if I could perſuade men to believe that theſe things are not yea and nay, and to make them haſte towards him who haſteth to judge the word, and to call men to an account, eſpecially anent their improvement of this goſpel. Even ſo, come LORD JESUS.

FINIS.

Queſt. 1. *WHAT is the great buſineſs a man hath to do in the world?*

Anſw. To make ſure a ſaving intereſt in Chriſt Jeſus, and to walk ſuitably thereunto.

Q. 2. *Have not all the members of the viſible church a ſaving intereſt in Chriſt?*

A. No verily; yea, but a very few of them have it.

Q. 3. *How ſhall I know if I have a ſaving intereſt in him?*

A. Ordinarily the Lord prepareth his own way in the ſoul, by a work of humiliation, and diſcovereth a man's ſin and miſery to him, and exerciſeth him ſo therewith, that he longs for the Phyſician Chriſt Jeſus.

Q. 4. *How ſhall I know if I have got a competent diſcovery of my ſin and miſery?*

A. A competent ſight of it makes a man take ſalvation to heart above any thing in this world: it maketh him diſclaim all relief in himſelf, even in his beſt things: it maketh Chriſt, who is the Redeemer, very precious to the ſoul: it makes a man ſtand in awe to ſin afterwards, and makes him content to be ſaved upon any terms God pleaſeth.

Q. 5. *What other way may I diſcern a ſaving intereſt in him?*

A. By the going out of my heart ſeriouſly and affectionately towards him as he is held out in the goſpel, and this is faith or believing.

Q. 6. *How ſhall I know if my heart goeth out after him aright, and that my faith is true ſaving faith?*

A. Where the heart goeth out aright after him, in true and ſaving faith, the ſoul pleaſeth Chriſt alone above all things, and pleaſeth him in all his three offices, to rule and inſtruct, as well as to ſave; and is content to cleave unto him, whatſoever inconveniences may follow.

Q. 7. *What other mark of a ſaving intereſt in Chriſt can you give to me?* *A.* He

A. He that is in Chriſt ſavingly, is a new creature, he is graciouſly changed and renewed in ſome meaſure, in the whole man, and in all his ways, pointing towards all the known commands of God.

Q. 8. *What if I find ſin now and then prevailing over me?*

A. Although every ſin deſerveth everlaſting vengeance, yet if you be afflicted for your failings, confeſs them with ſhame of face unto God, reſolving to ſtrive againſt them honeſtly henceforth, and flee unto Chriſt for pardon, you ſhall obtain mercy, and your intereſt ſtands ſure.

Q. 9. *What ſhall the man do who cannot lay claim to Chriſt Jeſus, nor any of thoſe marks ſpoken of?*

A. Let him not take reſt until he make ſure unto himſelf a ſaving intereſt in Chriſt.

Q. 10. *What way can a man make ſure an interſt in Chriſt, who never had a ſaving intereſt in him hitherto?*

A. He muſt take his ſins to heart, and his great hazard thereby, and he muſt take to heart God's offer of pardon and peace thro' Chriſt Jeſus, and heartily cloſe with God's offer, by betaking himſelf unto Chriſt the bleſſed refuge.

Q. 11. *What if my ſins be ſingularly heinous, and great beyond ordinary?*

A. Whatſoever thy ſins be, if thou wilt cloſe with Chriſt Jeſus by faith, thou ſhalt never enter into condemnation.

Q. 12. *Is faith in Chriſt only required of man?*

A Faith is the only condition upon which God doth offer peace and pardon unto men. But be aſſured, faith, if it be true and ſaving, will not be alone in the ſoul, but will be attended with true repentance, and a thankful ſtudy of conformity to God's image.

Q. 13. *How ſhall I be ſure that my heart doth accept of God's offer, and doth cloſe with Chriſt Jeſus?*

A. Go make a covenant expreſly, and by word ſpeak the thing unto God.

Q. 14.

Q. 14. *What way ſhall I do that?*

A. Set apart ſome bit of time, and having conſidered your own loſt eſtate, and the relief offered by Chriſt Jeſus, work up your heart to pleaſe and cloſe with that offer, and ſay unto God expreſly, That you do accept of that offer, and of him to be your God in Chriſt; and do give up yourſelf to him to be ſaved in his way without reſervation or exception in any caſe; and that you henceforth will wait for ſalvation in the way he hath appointed.

Q. 15. *What if I break unto God afterwards?*

A. You muſt reſolve on his ſtrength not to break, and watch over your own way, and put your heart in his hand to keep it: and if you break, you muſt confeſs it unto God, and judge yourſelf for it, and flee to the advocate for pardon, and reſolve to do no more ſo: and this you muſt do as often as you fail.

Q. 16. *How ſhall I come to full aſſurance of my intereſt in Chriſt, ſo as it may be above controverſy?*

A. Learn to lay your weight upon the blood of Chriſt, and ſtudy purity and holineſs in all manner of converſation; and pray for the witneſs of God's Spirit, to join with the blood and the water: and his teſtimony added unto theſe will eſtabliſh you in the faith of an intereſt in Chriſt.

Q. 17. *What is the conſequence of ſuch cloſing with God in Chriſt by heart and mouth?*

A. Union and communion with God, all good here, and his bleſſed fellowſhip in heaven for ever afterwards.

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Q. 18. *What if I ſlight all theſe things, and do not lay them to heart to put them in practice?*

A. The Lord cometh with his angels in flaming fire, to render vengeance to them who obey not this goſpel, and thy judgment ſhall be greater than the judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah; and ſo much the greater that thou haſt read this Treatiſe, for it ſhall be a witneſs againſt thee in that day.

An

TO agrege, to *aggravate* or *heighten* Page 241. l. 6.

To airt, to *direct*, P. 88. l. 23. from airth a point in the heavens, P. 90. l. 6.

Anent, *of*, or *concerning*. P. 90. l. 6.

Benfail, to do a thing with a *Benfail*, is to do it with *Force* and *Vigour*, as it were with a *bent fail*, P. 239. l. 9. and 18.

Caſt, to *caſt* out with one, is to *fall out with* him, P. 100. l. 21. to *caſt up* a thing to a man, is to *upbraid* him with it, P. 87. l. 16. one is ſaid to give another a *caſt* of his *hand*, when he gives him a voluntary and effectual *aſſiſtance*. P. 81. l. 29.

A cautioner, a *ſurety*, P. 79. l. 29.

To compete with one, is to become his *rival*, P. 120. l. 7.

To condeſcend upon, is to give a particular *inſtance* of, P. 71. l. 10. and 96. l. 23.

Conform, *conformable*, P. 163. l. 28.

To depone, to *depoſe*, or *ſwear* to a thing as a witneſs, P. 157. l. 23. and 158. l. 4.

A dittay, is either an *accuſation*, or a *ſentence* of condemnation, P. 200. l. 28.

Expede, *expedited* or *diſpatched*, P. 83. l. 14.

An Extract, an *exemplification*, P. 237. l. 20.

Fainteth, maketh *faint*, P. 187. l. 19.

Feckleſs, *weak*, as it were *effectleſs*, P. 198. l. 3.

A glance, *glimpſe*, P. 159. l. 16.

To haft, or heft, to *fix*, as a knife is fixed in its *haft*.

Hands, to be in *hands* with a thing, is to be in *poſſeſſion* of it, P. 210. l. 7. and 215. l. 26.

To inſtruct a thing, is to *prove* it clearly P. 133. l. 17. and 185. l. 12. and 247. l. 27.

Law-biding, able to anſwer a *charge*, or *accuſation*, P. 112. l. 1.

To miſken a thing, is to *let it alone*, *forbear* it, or *leave of meddling with it*.

To miſken a perſon, is not *to own that you know him*, *to take no notice of him*, or *to neglect him*. P. 88. l. 31.

Paſs gilt, *current money*, P. 180. l. 7.
To pleaſe a thing, it to be *pleaſed with it.*
To put out, to *exert*, or *put forth*, P. 165. l. 18. and 186. l. 11.
A reel a *diſorderly motion*, P. 136. l. 8. and 190. l. 31.
To ſhed with a perſon, is to *part from him*, or *to leave him*, P. 213. l. 18.
To be ſib, or have a ſibneſs to a man, is to be *akin* to him, P. 85. 22.
To ſit an offer, *is not to accept of it in time*, P. 82. l. 18.
To ſlait, to *abaſe in the very worſt manner*, P. 142. l. 19.
To ſway or ſway towards a thing, is to *bend* towards it, P. 115. 20.
To take up a thing, is *to underſtand* or *apprehend* it, P. 103. l. 4. and 107. l. 31.
There away, *that way*, P.
To tryſt, or to make a tryſt, is *to appoint a meeting*: in the country a tryſt is *meeting* to finiſh a bargain, or *to compoſe a difference* betwixt neighbours, *and the* tryſting-place is the *place of meeting*, P. 219. 23.
To win thither, to *get thither*, P. 112. l. 3.
Won at, *attained to*, P. 104. 31.
Waff here ſignifies a *flaſh*, P. 158. l. 28.

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There are ſome expreſſions which are now become a little low that were not ſo when this book was written: there are likewiſe ſome phraſes which are not Engliſh, but being expreſſed in Engliſh words, they will be eaſily underſtood by the Engliſh reader. Not one word in the edition publiſhed by the author is changed in this, except that *ſhewed* is printed inſtead of *ſhew*, which was the old preterite tenſe, according to the cuſtom of forming the preterite tenſe in *ew* of the Verbs which end in *aw* or *ow*; as *draw, drew; grow, grew.* After the ſame manner the *Scots* Verb *ſhow or ſhaw* made in the preterite tenſe ſhew, which is ſtill continued in ſome law forms.

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